

A COMPILATION OF WRITINGS USED FOR ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED IN BUILDING A STRONG BAHÁ'Í IDENTITY IN YOUNG CHILDREN: A CONCRETE APPROACH

(Expanded Aug. 9th, 2008)

(SEPARATE COMPILATIONS ON HAPPINESS, MATERIALISM, THE STATION OF THE TRUE BELIEVER, SERVICE, THE POWER OF PRAYER, OBLIGATORY PRAYER, FASTING, THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD, STEADFASTNESS, LAWS, PROGRESSIVE REVELATION, LIFE AFTER DEATH, THE HEALING OF THE WORLD, AND SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.)

Some Writings using plant, flower, and garden metaphors for the human soul or heart:

The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. This is evidenced by those who, today, though without a single letter of the accepted standards of learning, are occupying the loftiest seats of knowledge; and the garden of their hearts is adorned, through the showers of divine grace, with the roses of wisdom and the tulips of understanding. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, page 211)

Wherefore, be thankful to God, for having strengthened thee to aid His Cause, for having made the flowers of knowledge and understanding to spring forth in the garden of thine heart. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 303)

O FRIEND! In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love.....
(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 3)

In like manner, endeavour to comprehend the meaning of the "changing of the earth." Know thou, that upon whatever hearts the bountiful showers of mercy, raining from the "heaven" of divine Revelation, have fallen, the earth of those hearts hath verily been changed into the earth of divine knowledge and wisdom. What myrtles of unity hath the soil of their hearts produced! What blossoms of true knowledge and wisdom hath their illumined bosoms yielded! (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, page 46)

Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of thy heart, and water them with the water of certitude, that the hyacinths of My knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green in the sacred city of thy heart. (Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 33) (See also Persian #78)

In the soil of whose heart will these holy seeds germinate? From the garden of whose soul will the blossoms of the invisible realities spring forth? (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, page 61)

I was as one dead, Thou didst quicken me with the water of life. I was withered, Thou didst revive me with the heavenly stream of Thine utterance which hath flowed forth from the Pen of the All-Merciful. (Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, pages 264-265)

Man is a child of God, most noble, lofty and beloved by God, his Creator. Therefore, he must ever strive that the divine bounties and virtues bestowed upon him may prevail and control him. Just now the soil of human hearts seems like black earth, but in the innermost substance of this dark soil there are thousands of fragrant flowers latent. We must endeavor to cultivate and awaken these potentialities, discover the secret treasure in this very mine and depository of God, bring forth these resplendent powers long hidden in human hearts. Then will the glories of both worlds be blended and increased and the quintessence of human existence be made manifest.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 294) (see also pages 148-149)

O God! Educate these children. These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy garden. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Compassionate.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 194)

O Lord! I am a child, enable me to grow beneath the shadow of Thy loving-kindness. I am a tender plant; cause me to be nurtured through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy bounty. I am a sapling of the garden of love, make me into a fruitful tree. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful, and Thou art the All-Loving, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing.

(Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i Prayers and Tablets for the Young, page 10)

The purpose and mission of the holy, divine Messengers is the training and advancement of humanity, the cultivation of divine fruits in the gardens of human hearts.....

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 340)

They are the divine Gardeners Who till the earth of human hearts and minds. They educate man, uproot the weeds, burn the thorns and remodel the waste places into gardens and orchards where fruitful trees grow. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 295)

The holy, heavenly Manifestations of God have been the Teachers. They are the divine Gardeners Who transform the jungles of human nature into fruitful orchards and make the thorny places blossom as the rose. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 353)

The holy Manifestations are the ideal Gardeners of human souls, the divine Cultivators of human hearts. The world of existence is but a jungle of disorder and confusion, a state of nature producing nothing but fruitless, useless trees. The ideal Gardeners train these wild, uncultivated human trees, cause them to become fruitful, water and cultivate them day by day so that they adorn the world of existence and continue to flourish in the utmost beauty. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 466)

The gardeners of the world of humanity are the Prophets of God.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, page 194)

Some Writings using fragrance and perfume metaphors:

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 320-321)

This is the Day whereon every sweet smelling thing hath derived its fragrance from the smell of My garment - a garment that hath shed its perfume upon the whole of creation.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 30)

Say: From My laws the sweet-smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of Victory will be planted upon the highest peaks. The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty." Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of his Best-Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can describe.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, pages 20-21)

Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 295)

....enable me to draw nigh unto Thee through the fragrance of Thy holiness.

(The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 197)

The beautiful perfume of your noble lives will permeate everywhere.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 118)

Some Writings which use the sweetness metaphor:

Were any man to ponder in his heart that which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed and to taste of its sweetness, he would, of a certainty, find himself emptied and delivered from his own desires, and utterly subservient to the Will of the Almighty. Happy is the man that hath attained so high a station, and hath not deprived himself of so bountiful a grace. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 343)

Were ye to taste of the sweetness of the sayings of the All-Merciful, ye would unhesitatingly forsake your selves, and would lay down your lives for the Well-Beloved. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 84-85)

Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, p. 320)

Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 20)

Cause me to taste, O my Lord, the divine sweetness of Thy remembrance and praise. I swear by Thy might! Whosoever tasteth of its sweetness will rid himself of all attachment to the world and all that is therein, and will set his face towards Thee, cleansed from the remembrance of any one except Thee. (Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, pages 82-83)

May your souls be illumined by the light of the Words of God...for no happiness is sweeter than spiritual comprehension of the divine teachings. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 459-460)

Some miscellaneous Writings using light and/or flame/fire metaphors:

(See also quotes relating to stars for more light imagery. For the luminarias for Ridvan, relate the bag to the world or to the individual, and the candle to the light of Baha-u-llah's Revelation, or the light of God. Children draw a scene from the world or themselves on the bag accordingly. Many of the following quotes lend themselves to this perfectly.)

The Day Star of His great glory hath shed its radiance upon you... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 167)

O SON OF BEING! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me. For I have created thee rich and have bountifully shed My favor upon thee. (Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, # 11)

Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One. The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 10-11)

.....the Day-Star of Thy presence hath shed its radiance upon Thy people. (Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, page 241)

The whole earth is illumined with the resplendent glory of God's Revelation.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 96)

I am the guiding Light that illumineth the way. (Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 169)

‘The light hath shone forth from the horizon of Revelation, and the whole earth hath been illumined at the coming of Him Who is the Lord of the Day of the Covenant!’
~Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pages 133-134

I beg of Thee, O my God,..... to make known unto Thy servants this luminous Way and this straight Path, that they may acknowledge Thy unity and Thy oneness.... Illumine, O my Lord, the eyes of Thy servants, and brighten their hearts with the splendors of the light of Thy knowledge, that they may apprehend the greatness of this most sublime station, and recognize this most luminous Horizon, that haply the clamor of men may fail to deter them from turning their gaze towards the effulgent light of Thy unity.....(Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, page 275)

Illumine my inner being, O my Lord, with the splendors of the Day-Spring of Thy Revelation, even as Thou didst illumine my outer being with the morning light of Thy favor.
(Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, page 251)

Let thy soul glow with the flame of this undying Fire that burneth in the midmost heart of the world, in such wise that the waters of the universe shall be powerless to cool down its ardor.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 38)

Every discerning eye can, in this Day, perceive the dawning light of God's Revelation, and every attentive ear can recognize the Voice that was heard from the Burning Bush. ~Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 271

Blessed is he who hath rent the intervening veils asunder and is illumined by the radiant light of divine Revelation. ~Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pages 255-256

Throughout the centuries and ages many a man hath waited expectant for God's Revelation, and yet when the Light shone forth from the horizon of the world, all but a few turned their faces away from it.
~Baha'u'llah: Women, page 359

Witness how every time the Day Star of Divine bounty hath shed the light of His Revelation upon the world, the people of His Day have arisen against Him, and repudiated His truth. ~Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 56

May each one of you become a shining lamp, of which the flame is the Love of God. May your hearts burn with the radiance of unity. May your eyes be illumined with the effulgence of the Sun of Truth!
(‘Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 26)

Spread far and wide the precepts and counsels of the loving Lord, so that this world will change into another world, and this darksome earth will be flooded with light.....
(‘Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... ‘Abdu'l-Baha, page 3)

God has crowned you with honour and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world! (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 68)

Deliver me from darkness, make me a brilliant light...
(‘Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i Prayers (US edition), page 37)

Beg thou God to make thee a lighted candle, so that thou mayest guide a great multitude through this darksome world. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... ‘Abdu'l-Baha, page 100)

Rise up to champion this Cause; open your lips and teach. In the meeting place of life be ye a guiding candle; in the skies of this world be dazzling stars; in the gardens of unity be birds of the spirit, singing of inner truths and mysteries. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... ‘Abdu'l-Baha, page 271)

They..... must burn brightly even as a candle in every meeting and must kindle the flame of Divine love in every assembly; that the light of truth may rise resplendent in the midmost heart of the world,....that faces may shine radiantly, hearts be filled with the Divine spirit and souls be made heavenly.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Will and Testament, page 10)

Every morning at dawn I supplicate the Kingdom of God and ask that you may be filled with the breath of the Holy Spirit, so that you may become brilliant candles, shine with the light of guidance and dispel the darkness of error. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith, page 429)

The world of humanity is filled with darkness; you are its radiant candles.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 337)

Strive, therefore, with heart and soul that ye become ignited candles in the assemblage of the world, glittering stars on the horizon of Truth and may become the cause of the propagation of the light of the Kingdom... (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 104)

....make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i Prayers (US edition), page 37)
Give them Thy grace to withstand the onslaught of self and passion, to follow the light of Divine Guidance. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Will and Testament, page 15)

Bestow upon me a heart which, like unto a glass, may be illumined with the light of Thy love.....
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i Prayers (US edition), page 72)

Every heart should radiate unity, so that the Light of the one Divine Source of all may shine forth bright and luminous. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 84)

All the holy ones of God have tried with heart and soul to spread the light of love and unity throughout the world, so that the darkness of materiality might disappear and the light of spirituality might shine forth among the children of men. Then would hate, slander and murder disappear, and in their stead love, unity and peace would reign. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, pages 119-120)

I pray that you may be manifestations of the love of Baha'u'llah, that each one of you may become like a clear lamp of crystal from which the rays of the bounties of the Blessed Perfection may shine forth to all nations and peoples. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 3)

May the light of love shine forth and illumine hearts,
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 115-116)

.....shine forth like unto the stars with the light of the Most Great Guidance.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Tablets of the Divine Plan, page 5)

Like a candle must ye shed your light,....and even as the splendours shed by the true Sun, must ye illumine the hearts of humankind..... In the darkness of the world be ye radiant flames.... Now is the time to serve, now is the time to be on fire. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, pages 266-267)

O true companions! All humankind are as children in a school, and the Dawning-Points of Light, the Sources of divine revelation, are the teachers, wondrous and without peer. ~`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, page 128

I pray in your behalf, seeking heavenly confirmations for you that each one may become a radiant candle, shedding light in the world of humanity.
~`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 320

Some Writings which use candle or flame with heart or love metaphors:

(Good to recite to the light of candle shaped hearts--- or during the Fast or Ridvan, place 19 or 12 red paper hearts on a wall, and child places notary seal on a heart each day after reciting a verse. Older

children can be encouraged to memorize one a day, thereby earning the notary seal which symbolizes the light in the quote and the illumination their heart receives when it retains the Words of God. You can also cut the seals to look like a flame. Some of the preceding quotes with light and heart metaphors could also be used.)

The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. (Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 32)

Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your radiant hearts.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 325)

....kindle within your hearts the everlasting torch of divine guidance.
(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 35)

Methinks, the lamp of Thy love is burning in their hearts, and the light of Thy tenderness is lit within their breasts. (Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, page 3)

The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth.....(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 96)

O Friends! You must all be so ablaze in this day with the fire of the love of God that the heat thereof may be manifest in all your veins, your limbs and members of your body, and the peoples of the world may be ignited by this heat and turn to the horizon of the Beloved.
(Baha'u'llah: Guidelines for Teaching, page 293)

Be ablaze as the fire, that ye may burn away the veils of heedlessness and set aglow, through the quickening energies of the love of God, the chilled and wayward heart.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 322-323)

So far as ye are able, ignite a candle of love in every meeting, and with tenderness rejoice and cheer ye every heart. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 34)

....let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 16)

May each one of you become a shining lamp, of which the flame is the Love of God. May your hearts burn with the radiance of unity. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 26)

I pray for each and all that you may be as flames of love in the world, and that the brightness of your light and the warmth of your affection may reach the heart of every sad and sorrowing child of God.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 95)

.....kindle in thy heart the fire of the love of God to such an extent that any one who approaches thee will feel its warmth.... ~Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 113

Some Writings using the star metaphor:

Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 196)

God has crowned you with honour and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world! (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 68)

All those who seek truth in the Heavenly Kingdom shine like the stars; they are like fruit trees laden with choice fruit, like seas full of precious pearls. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 118)

I pray that God in His mercy may illumine your hearts and souls with His glorious Light, then shall each one of you shine as a radiant star in the dark places of the world.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 70)

Ye must shine as stars radiating the light of love toward all mankind.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 348)

Let the love and light of the Kingdom radiate through you until all who look upon you shall be illumined by its reflection. Be as stars, brilliant and sparkling in the loftiness of their heavenly station.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 8)

It is incumbent upon you to ponder in your hearts and meditate upon His words, and humbly to call upon Him, and to put away self in His heavenly Cause. These are the things that will make of you signs of guidance unto all mankind, and brilliant stars shining down from the all-highest horizon, and towering trees in the Abha Paradise. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 241)

O my Lord and my Hope! Help Thou Thy loved ones to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, to remain faithful to Thy manifest Cause, and to carry out the commandments Thou didst set down for them in Thy Book of Splendours; that they may become banners of guidance and lamps of the Company above, wellsprings of Thine infinite wisdom, and stars that lead aright, as they shine down from the supernal sky.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 259)

Bestow upon us the breath of the Holy Spirit, so that we may be assisted in Thy service and, like unto brilliant stars, shine in these regions with the light of Thy guidance.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Tablets of the Divine Plan, page 65)

He whom the grace of Thy mercy aideth, though he be but a drop, shall become the boundless ocean, and the merest atom which the outpouring of Thy loving-kindness assisteth, shall shine even as the radiant star. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i Prayers (US edition), page 32)

O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i Prayers (US edition), page 37)

Erelong ye will, with your own eyes, witness how brilliantly every one of you, even as a shining star, will radiate in the firmament of your country the light of divine Guidance, and will bestow upon its people the glory of an everlasting life. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Tablets of the Divine Plan, page 39)

Strive, therefore, with heart and soul that ye become..... glittering stars on the horizon of Truth and may become the cause of the propagation of the light of the Kingdom...
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 104)

And those souls whose inner being is lit by the love of God are even as spreading rays of light, and they shine out like stars of holiness in a pure and crystalline sky.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 203)

Some Writings using heart and cleanse metaphor:

Led by the light of unfailing guidance, and invested with supreme sovereignty, They are commissioned to use the inspiration of Their words, the effusions of Their infallible grace and the sanctifying breeze of Their Revelation for the cleansing of every longing heart and receptive spirit from the dross and dust of earthly cares and limitations. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 67)

O SON OF BEING! Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation.... (Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, # 59)
Cleanse from your hearts the love of worldly things.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 275)

For love of God and spiritual attraction do cleanse and purify the human heart and dress and adorn it with the spotless garment of holiness.... (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... ‘Abdu'l-Baha, page 202)

Some Writings using heart as a mirror metaphor:

A pure heart is as a mirror; cleanse it with the burnish of love and severance from all save God, that the true sun may shine within it and the eternal morning dawn.
(Baha'u'llah: Seven Valleys and Four Valleys, page 21)

Cleanse the mirrors of your hearts from the dross of the world and all that is therein, that they may reflect the resplendent light of God. (Baha'u'llah, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 207)

(The following is a good quote for mirror of the heart activity, where children learn about what cleanses the mirror of their hearts. I use this one to support the idea that studying the Words of the Manifestation is a very potent purifier):

Led by the light of unfailing guidance, and invested with supreme sovereignty, They are commissioned to use the inspiration of Their words, the effusions of Their infallible grace and the sanctifying breeze of Their Revelation for the cleansing of every longing heart and receptive spirit from the dross and dust of earthly cares and limitations. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 67)

Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 65)

The most important thing is to polish the mirrors of hearts in order that they may become illumined and receptive of the divine light. One heart may possess the capacity of the polished mirror; another, be covered and obscured by the dust and dross of this world. Although the same Sun is shining upon both, in the mirror which is polished, pure and sanctified you may behold the Sun in all its fullness, glory and power, revealing its majesty and effulgence; but in the mirror which is rusted and obscured there is no capacity for reflection, although so far as the Sun itself is concerned it is shining thereon and is neither lessened nor deprived. Therefore, our duty lies in seeking to polish the mirrors of our hearts in order that we shall become reflectors of that light and recipients of the divine bounties which may be fully revealed through them. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 14-15) (See also pages 147-8)

May your hearts become clear and pure like unto polished mirrors in which may be reflected the full glory of the Sun of Truth. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 95)

We must purify ourselves from the mire and soil of earthly contact until our hearts become as mirrors in clearness and the light of the most great guidance reveals itself in them.
(‘Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 148)

Let your hearts be as mirrors in which the radiance of the Sun of Reality is visible.
(‘Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 183)

May the mirrors of hearts be cleansed from dust in order that the Sun of Truth may be reflected therein.
(‘Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 244)

The Manifestations as perfect Mirrors:

Every one of them is a mirror of God, reflecting naught else but His Self, His Beauty, His Might and Glory, if ye will understand. All else besides them are to be regarded as mirrors capable of reflecting the glory of these Manifestations Who are themselves the Primary Mirrors of the Divine Being, if ye be not devoid

of understanding. No one hath ever escaped them, neither are they to be hindered from achieving their purpose. These Mirrors will everlastingly succeed each other, and will continue to reflect the light of the Ancient of Days. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 74)

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace, according to His saying: "His grace hath transcended all things; My grace hath encompassed them all" hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence. These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-springs of ancient glory are one and all the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty. The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory. They are the Treasuries of divine knowledge, and the Repositories of celestial wisdom. Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed the light that can never fade. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, pages 99-100, also in Gleanings, page 47)

These Prophets and chosen Ones of God are the recipients and revealers of all the unchangeable attributes and names of God. They are the mirrors that truly and faithfully reflect the light of God. Whatsoever is applicable to them is in reality applicable to God, Himself, Who is both the Visible and the Invisible. The knowledge of Him, Who is the Origin of all things, and attainment unto Him, are impossible save through knowledge of, and attainment unto, these luminous Beings who proceed from the Sun of Truth. By attaining, therefore, to the presence of these holy Luminaries, the "Presence of God" Himself is attained. From their knowledge, the knowledge of God is revealed, and from the light of their countenance, the splendour of the Face of God is made manifest. (Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 141)

These Tabernacles of Holiness, these Primal Mirrors which reflect the light of unfading glory, are but expressions of Him Who is the Invisible of the Invisibles. By the revelation of these Gems of Divine virtue all the names and attributes of God, such as knowledge and power, sovereignty and dominion, mercy and wisdom, glory, bounty, and grace, are made manifest (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 47-48)

The Sun of Truth dwelleth in a sky to which no soul hath any access, and which no mind can reach, and He is far beyond the comprehension of all creatures. Yet the Holy Manifestations of God are even as a looking-glass, burnished and without stain, which gathereth streams of light out of that Sun, and then scattereth the glory over the rest of creation. In that polished surface, the Sun with all Its majesty standeth clearly revealed. Thus, should the mirrored Sun proclaim, 'I am the Sun!' this is but truth; and should It cry, 'I am not the Sun!' this is the truth as well. And although the Day-Star, with all Its glory, Its beauty, Its perfections, be clearly visible in that mirror without stain, still It hath not come down from Its own lofty station in the realms above, It hath not made Its way into the mirror; rather doth It continue to abide, as It will forever, in the supernal heights of Its own holiness. (Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 50)

Some Writings relating virtues and light:

Let your acts be a guide unto all mankind..... It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. Through them the brightness of your light can be shed upon the whole earth. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 305)

The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 36)
Strive to be shining examples unto all mankind, and true reminders of the virtues of God amidst men. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah p. 138)

Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy.....
(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 88)

You must become the shining candles of moral precepts and spiritual ideals and be the means of the illumination of others. Clothe your bodies with the robes of virtues.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Excellence in All Things, page 376)

It is religion, to sum up, which produces all human virtues, and it is these virtues which are the bright candles of civilization. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Secret of Divine Civilization, page 98)

.....man must strive that his reality may manifest virtues and perfections, the light whereof may shine upon everyone. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Will and Testament, page 13)

So far as ye are able, ignite a candle of love in every meeting, and with tenderness rejoice and cheer ye every heart. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 34)

....for love is light, no matter in what abode it dwelleth; and hate is darkness, no matter where it may make its nest. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 3)

.....let each one of you be as a lamp shining forth with the light of the virtues of the world of humanity.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 453)

Ye must shine as stars radiating the light of love toward all mankind.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 348)

Shed the light of a boundless love on every human being whom you meet.....
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 38)

Some Writings using the gem metaphor for virtues:

The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 260)

HE IS THE GLORY OF GLORIES

This is that which hath descended from the realm of glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, and revealed unto the Prophets of old. We have taken the inner essence thereof and clothed it in the garment of brevity, as a token of grace unto the righteous, that they may stand faithful unto the Covenant of God, may fulfill in their lives His trust, and in the realm of spirit obtain the gem of Divine virtue.
(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, page 1)

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 287)

(Although the following quote does not mention gems, in light of the above quote it's content supports that the gems are virtues, and specifically labels them):

The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 299)

Some Writings about virtues:

Whoso ariseth, in this Day, to aid Our Cause, and summoneth to his assistance the hosts of a praiseworthy character and upright conduct, the influence flowing from such an action will, most certainly, be diffused throughout the whole world. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 286-287)

.....well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues. (Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 49)

The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 215)

Holy words and pure and goodly deeds ascend unto the heaven of celestial glory. Strive that your deeds may be cleansed from the dust of self and hypocrisy and find favor at the court of glory; for ere long the assayers of mankind shall, in the holy presence of the Adored One, accept naught but absolute virtue and deeds of stainless purity. (Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 69)

O MY FRIENDS! Quench ye the lamp of error, and kindle within your hearts the everlasting torch of divine guidance. For ere long the assayers of mankind shall, in the holy presence of the Adored, accept naught but purest virtue and deeds of stainless holiness. (Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 35)
`.....the purpose of religion is the acquisition of praiseworthy virtues, the betterment of morals, the spiritual development of mankind..... (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 152)

God willing, thou wilt be loving and obedient to thy father and mother, kind and considerate to thy brother and sister, and wilt grow from day to day in faith and certitude. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Tablet of the Heart p.18)

Good character must be taught. Light must be spread afar, so that, in the school of humanity, all may acquire the heavenly characteristics of the spirit.....
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 136)

`What is the purpose of our lives?' Abdu'l-Baha: - "To acquire virtues".
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 177)

Should any one of you enter a city, he should become a centre of attraction by reason of his sincerity, his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his truthfulness and loving-kindness towards all the peoples of the world, (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 71)

Pray to God that He may strengthen you in divine virtue, so that you may be as angels in the world,
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 61)

Be kind to all peoples; care for every person;..... strive ye to gladden every soul.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, pages 244-245)

It is your duty to be exceedingly kind to every human being, and to wish him well;..... to act in accordance with the instructions of Baha'u'llah and walk His path - until ye change the world of man into the world of God. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 90)

You live to do good and to bring happiness to others. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, pages 112-113)

Every child must be trained in the things of the spirit, so that he may embody all the virtues and become a source of glory to the Cause of God. Otherwise, the mere word `Baha'i', if it yield no fruit, will come to nothing.

Strive then to the best of thine ability to let these children know that a Baha'i is one who embodieth all the perfections, that he must shine out like a lighted taper - not be darkness upon darkness and yet bear the name `Baha'i'. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 143)

.....develop spiritual characteristics and the praiseworthy virtues of humankind. This is the primary consideration. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Education, page 282)

First and most important is training in behaviour and good character; the rectification of qualities; arousing the desire to become accomplished and acquire perfections, and to cleave unto the religion of God and stand firm in His Laws: (`Abdu'l-Baha: Education, page 282)

Some Writings which use spring metaphors and also relate to Naw-Ruz: (See also garden/flower metaphors on page 1 for quotes which can be used for Naw-Ruz activities, relating spiritual springtime to the garden of the human heart, or the garden of humanity. Most of these are too long to use with children—they were put in for your inspiration, and suitable phrases can be gleaned from them.)

O My servants! It behoveth you to refresh and revive your souls through the gracious favors which, in this Divine, this soul-stirring Springtime, are being showered upon you. The Day Star of His great glory hath shed its radiance upon you, and the clouds of His limitless grace have overshadowed you. How high the reward of him that hath not deprived himself of so great a bounty, nor failed to recognize the beauty of his Best-Beloved in this, His new attire. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 167)

A new life is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause or perceived its motive. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 196)

The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day star of blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 27-28)

Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 84)

Know thou that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God. Whenever this robe hath fulfilled its purpose, the Almighty will assuredly renew it. For every age requireth a fresh measure of the light of God. Every Divine Revelation hath been sent down in a manner that befitted the circumstances of the age in which it hath appeared. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 81)

Man is like unto a tree. If he be adorned with fruit, he hath been and will ever be worthy of praise and commendation. Otherwise a fruitless tree is but fit for fire. The fruits of the human tree are exquisite, highly desired and dearly cherished. Among them are upright character, virtuous deeds and a goodly utterance. The springtime for earthly trees occurreth once every year, while the one for human trees appeareth in the Days of God - exalted be His glory. Were the trees of men's lives to be adorned in this divine Springtime with the fruits that have been mentioned, the effulgence of the light of Justice would, of a certainty, illumine all the dwellers of the earth and everyone would abide in tranquillity and contentment beneath the sheltering shadow of Him Who is the Object of all mankind. The Water for these trees is the living water of the sacred Words uttered by the Beloved of the world. In one instant are such trees planted and in the next their branches shall, through the outpourings of the showers of divine mercy, have reached the skies. A dried-up tree, however, hath never been nor will be worthy of any mention. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 257)

The blessed Lote-Tree standeth, in this day, before thy face, laden with heavenly, with new and wondrous fruits. Gaze on it, detached from all else save it. Thus hath the Tongue of might and power spoken at this Spot which God hath adorned with the footsteps of His Most Great Name and Mighty Announcement. (Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 152)

The divine Prophets are as the coming of spring, each renewing and quickening the teachings of the Prophet Who came before Him. Just as all seasons of spring are essentially one as to newness of life, vernal showers and beauty, so the essence of the mission and accomplishment of all the Prophets is one and the same. Now the people of religion have lost sight of the essential reality of the spiritual springtime. (Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 127)

.....if religions did not change and alter, there would be no need of renewal. In the beginning the tree was in all its beauty, and full of blossoms and fruits, but at last it became old and entirely fruitless, and it withered and decayed. This is why the True Gardener plants again an incomparable young tree of the same kind and species, which grows and develops day by day, and spreads a wide shadow in the divine garden, and yields admirable fruit. So it is with religions; through the passing of time they change from their original foundation, the truth of the Religion of God entirely departs, and the spirit of it does not stay; heresies appear, and it becomes a body without a soul. That is why it is renewed. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, page 166)

The coming of a Manifestation of God is the season of spiritual spring. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 54)

When the phenomenal sun appears from the vernal point of dawning in the zodiac, a wondrous and vibrant commotion is set up in the body of the earthly world. The withered trees are quickened with animation, the black soil becomes verdant with new growth, fresh and fragrant flowers bloom, the world of dust is refreshed, renewed life forces surge through the veins of every animate being, and a new springtime carpets the meadows, plains, mountains and valleys with wondrous forms of life. That which was dead and desolate is revived and resuscitated; that which was withered, faded and stricken is transformed by the spirit of a new creation. In the same way the Sun of Reality, when it illumines the horizon of the inner world, animates, vivifies and quickens with a divine and wonderful power. The trees of human minds clothe themselves in new and verdant robes, putting on leaves and blossoms and bearing spiritual fruits of the heavenly glad tidings. Then fragrant flowers of inner significances appear from the soil of human souls, and the whole being of man awakens to a new and divine activity. This is the growth and development of the inner world through the effulgent light of divine guidance and the heat of the fire of the love of God. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 271)

Even so is the spiritual springtime when it comes. When the holy, divine Manifestations or Prophets appear in the world, a cycle of radiance, an age of mercy dawns. Everything is renewed. Minds, hearts and all human forces are reformed, perfections are quickened, sciences, discoveries and investigations are stimulated afresh, and everything appertaining to the virtues of the human world is revitalized. Consider this present century of radiance, and compare it with the past centuries. What a vast difference exists between them! How minds have developed! How perceptions have deepened! How discoveries have increased! What great projects have been accomplished! How many realities have become manifest! How many mysteries of creation have been probed and penetrated! What is the cause of this? It is through the efficacy of the spiritual springtime in which we are living. Day by day the world attains a new bounty. In this radiant century neither the old customs nor the old sciences, crafts, laws and regulations have remained. The old political principles are undergoing change, and a new body politic is in process of formation. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 278)

This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the "Resurrection Day" and now is the great "Day of Judgment." Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith, pages 351-352)

The spiritual world is like unto the phenomenal world. They are the exact counterpart of each other. Whatever objects appear in this world of existence are the outer pictures of the world of heaven. When we look upon the phenomenal world, we perceive that it is divided into four seasons; one is the season of spring, another the season of summer, another autumn and then these three seasons are followed by winter. When the season of spring appears in the arena of existence, the whole world is rejuvenated and finds new life. The soul-refreshing breeze is wafted from every direction; the soul-quickening bounty is everywhere; the cloud of mercy showers down its rain, and the sun shines upon everything. Day by day we perceive that the signs of vegetation are all about us. Wonderful flowers, hyacinths and roses

perfume the nostrils. The trees are full of leaves and blossoms, and the blossoms are followed by fruit. The spring and summer are followed by autumn and winter. The flowers wither and are no more; the leaves turn gray and life has gone. Then comes another springtime; the former springtime is renewed; again a new life stirs within everything.

The appearances of the Manifestations of God are the divine springtime. When Christ appeared in this world, it was like the vernal bounty; the outpouring descended; the effulgences of the Merciful encircled all things; the human world found new life. Even the physical world partook of it. The divine perfections were upraised; souls were trained in the school of heaven so that all grades of human existence received life and light. Then by degrees these fragrances of heaven were discontinued; the season of winter came upon the world; the beauties of spring vanished; the excellences and perfections passed away; the lights and quickening were no longer evident; the phenomenal world and its materialities conquered everything; the spiritualities of life were lost; the world of existence became life unto a lifeless body; there was no trace of the spring left.

Baha'u'llah has come into this world. He has renewed that springtime. The same fragrances are wafting; the same heat of the Sun is giving life; the same cloud is pouring its rain, and with our own eyes we see that the world of existence is advancing and progressing. The human world has found new life. ('Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 10)

Praise be to God! The springtime of God is at hand. This century is, verily, the spring season. The world of mind and kingdom of soul have become fresh and verdant by its bestowals. It has resuscitated the whole realm of existence. On one hand, the lights of reality are shining; on the other, the clouds of divine mercy are pouring down the fullness of heavenly bounty. Wonderful material progress is evident, and great spiritual discoveries are being made. Truly, this can be called the miracle of centuries, for it is replete with manifestations of the miraculous. The time has come when all mankind shall be united, when all races shall be loyal to one fatherland, all religions become one religion, and racial and religious bias pass away. It is a day in which the oneness of humankind shall uplift its standard and international peace, like the true morning, flood the world with its light. Therefore, we offer supplications to God, asking Him to dispel these gloomy clouds and uproot these imitations in order that the East and West may become radiant with love and unity, that the nations of the world shall embrace each other and the ideal spiritual brotherhood illumine the world like the glorious sun of the high heavens. This is our hope, our wish and desire. We pray that through the bounty and grace of God we may attain thereto. ('Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 153)

Just as the phenomenal sun shines upon the material world producing life and growth, likewise, the spiritual or prophetic Sun confers illumination upon the human world of thought and intelligence....., When the Sun of Reality returns to quicken the world of mankind, a divine bounty descends from the heaven of generosity. The realm of thoughts and ideals is set in motion and blessed with new life. Minds are developed, hopes brighten, aspirations become spiritual, the virtues of the human world appear with freshened power of growth, and the image and likeness of God become visible in man. It is the springtime of the inner world. ~Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 94-95

At the time of the vernal equinox in the material world a wonderful vibrant energy and new life-quickening is observed everywhere in the vegetable kingdom; the animal and human kingdoms are resuscitated and move forward with a new impulse. The whole world is born anew, resurrected. Gentle zephyrs are set in motion, wafting and fragrant; flowers bloom; the trees are in blossom, the air temperate and delightful; how pleasant and beautiful become the mountains, fields and meadows. Likewise, the spiritual bounty and springtime of God quicken the world of humanity with a new animus and vivification. All the virtues which have been deposited and potential in human hearts are being revealed from that Reality as flowers and blossoms from divine gardens. It is a day of joy, a time of happiness, a period of spiritual growth. I beg of God that this divine spiritual civilization may have the fullest impression and effect upon you. May you become as growing plants. May the trees of your hearts bring forth new leaves and variegated blossoms. May ideal fruits appear from them in order that the world of humanity, which has grown and developed in material civilization, may be quickened in the bringing forth of spiritual ideals. Just as human intellects have revealed the secrets of matter and have brought forth from the realm of the invisible the mysteries of nature, may minds and spirits, likewise, come into the knowledge of the verities of God, and the realities of the Kingdom be made manifest in human hearts. Then the world will be the paradise of Abha, the standard of the Most Great Peace will be borne aloft, and the oneness of the world

of humanity in all its beauty, glory and significance will become apparent. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 38-39)

It is the same with the spiritual cycles of the Prophets - that is to say, the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime; it is the divine splendor; it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened; hearts are refreshed and invigorated; souls become good; existence is set in motion; human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. General progress is achieved and revival takes place, for it is the day of resurrection, the time of excitement and ferment, and the season of bliss, of joy and of intense rapture.

Afterward the life-giving spring ends in fruitful summer. The word of God is exalted, the Law of God is promulgated; all things reach perfection. The heavenly table is spread, the holy breezes perfume the East and the West, the teachings of God conquer the world, men become educated, praiseworthy results are produced, universal progress appears in the world of humanity, and the divine bounties surround all things. The Sun of Reality rises from the horizon of the Kingdom with the greatest power and heat. When it reaches the meridian, it will begin to decline and descend, and the spiritual summer will be followed by autumn, when growth and development are arrested. Breezes change into blighting winds, and the unwholesome season dissipates the beauty and freshness of the gardens, plains and bowers - that is to say, attraction and goodwill do not remain, divine qualities are changed, the radiance of hearts is dimmed, the spirituality of souls is altered, virtues are replaced by vices, and holiness and purity disappear. Only the name of the Religion of God remains, and the exoteric forms of the divine teachings. The foundations of the Religion of God are destroyed and annihilated, and nothing but forms and customs exist. Divisions appear, firmness is changed into instability, and spirits become dead; hearts languish, souls become inert, and winter arrives - that is to say, the coldness of ignorance envelops the world, and the darkness of human error prevails. After this come indifference, disobedience, inconsiderateness, indolence, baseness, animal instincts and the coldness and insensibility of stones. It is like the season of winter when the terrestrial globe, deprived of the effect of the heat of the sun, becomes desolate and dreary. When the world of intelligence and thought has reached to this state, there remain only continual death and perpetual nonexistence.

When the season of winter has had its effect, again the spiritual springtime returns, and a new cycle appears. Spiritual breezes blow, the luminous dawn gleams, the divine clouds give rain, the rays of the Sun of Reality shine forth, the contingent world attains unto a new life and is clad in a wonderful garment. All the signs and the gifts of the past springtime reappear, with perhaps even greater splendor in this new season. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, pages 74-76)

Some good quotes for an Ayyam-i-Ha party celebrating the oneness of humanity and unity in diversity:

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 217)

Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who minglenth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 334)

It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 250)

Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness."
(Baha'u'llah as quoted by Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, page 37)

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light are these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day-Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words. (Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 14)

If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 315)

The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth, whilst the fierceness of the flame of enmity and hatred cannot but result in strife and ruin.
(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 88)

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. (Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, #68)

The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 215)

We have created you from one tree and have caused you to be as the leaves and fruit of the same tree, that haply ye may become a source of comfort to one another. Regard ye not others save as ye regard your own selves, that no feeling of aversion may prevail amongst you
(The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 129)

Bring those who have been excluded into the circle of intimate friends.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Education, page 293)

The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 53)

If you meet those of different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, and rejoice to be among them.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 53)

.....you all are the servants of one God and, therefore, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers. In the sight of God there is no distinction between whites and blacks; all are as one.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 425)

Your souls are as waves on the sea of the spirit; although each individual is a distinct wave, the ocean is one, all are united in God.

Every heart should radiate unity, so that the Light of the one Divine Source of all may shine forth bright and luminous. We must not consider the separate waves alone, but the entire sea. We should rise from the individual to the whole. The spirit is as one great ocean and the waves thereof are the souls of men.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 84)

Some good quotes for an Ayyam-i-Ha party celebrating inner beauty:

The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men.

~Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 36

The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. ~Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 215

.....the purpose of religion is the acquisition of praiseworthy virtues, the betterment of morals, the spiritual development of mankind..... ~`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 152

Pray to God that He may strengthen you in divine virtue, so that you may be as angels in the world..... ~`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 61

It is your duty to be exceedingly kind to every human being, and to wish him well;.... until ye change the world of man into the world of God.

~`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 90

God willing, thou wilt be loving and obedient to thy father and mother, kind and considerate to thy brother and sister, and wilt grow from day to day in faith and certitude.

~`Abdu'l-Baha: Tablet of the Heart p.18

Good character must be taught. Light must be spread afar, so that, in the school of humanity, all may acquire the heavenly characteristics of the spirit.....

~`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 136

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge..... Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. ~Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 285

The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.

~Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 260

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves.

~Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 287

Some good quotes for an Ayyam-i-Ha party relating to world unity:

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded.

Through the power of the words He hath uttered the whole of the human race can be illumined with the light of unity.....(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 286)

God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 79-81)

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light are these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day-Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words. (Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 14)

Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 292)

More quotes on world unity

O ye men of wisdom among nations! Shut your eyes to estrangement, then fix your gaze upon unity. Cleave tenaciously unto that which will lead to the well-being and tranquillity of all mankind. This span of earth is but one homeland and one habitation. It behoveth you to abandon vainglory which causeth alienation and to set your hearts on whatever will ensure harmony. In the estimation of the people of Baha man's glory lieth in his knowledge, his upright conduct, his praiseworthy character, his wisdom, and not in his nationality or rank. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pages 67-68)

Verily, the words which have descended from the heaven of the Will of God are the source of unity and harmony for the world. (Baha'u'llah as quoted by Shoghi Effendi in The Advent of Divine Justice, page 37)

They that are endued with sincerity and faithfulness should associate with all the peoples and kindreds of the earth with joy and radiance, inasmuch as consorting with people hath promoted and will continue to promote unity and concord, which in turn are conducive to the maintenance of order in the world and to the regeneration of nations. Blessed are such as hold fast to the cord of kindness and tender mercy and are free from animosity and hatred.

This Wronged One exhorteth the peoples of the world to observe tolerance and righteousness, which are two lights amidst the darkness of the world and two educators for the edification of mankind. Happy are they who have attained thereto and woe betide the heedless. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 36)

It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 250)

From the beginning of time the light of unity hath shed its divine radiance upon the world, and the greatest means for the promotion of that unity is for the peoples of the world to understand one another's writing and speech.choose one language from among those now existing or ... adopt a new one, and in like manner.... select a common script, both of which should be taught in all the schools of the world. Thus will the earth be regarded as one country and one home. The most glorious fruit of the tree of knowledge is this exalted word: Of one tree are all ye the fruit, and of one bough the leaves. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 127)

The purpose of religion as revealed from the heaven of God's holy Will is to establish unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world; make it not the cause of dissension and strife. The religion of God and His divine law are the most potent instruments and the surest of all means for the dawning of the light of unity amongst men. The progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquillity of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God. Religion bestoweth upon man the most precious of all gifts, offereth the cup of prosperity, imparteth eternal life, and showereth imperishable benefits upon mankind. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pages 129-130)

Shed the light of a boundless love on every human being whom you meet, whether of your country, your race, your political party, or of any other nation, colour or shade of political opinion. Heaven will support you while you work in this in-gathering of the scattered peoples of the world beneath the shadow of the almighty tent of unity. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 38)

Christ was the Prophet of the Christians, Moses of the Jews - why should not the followers of each prophet recognize and honour the other prophets also? If men could only learn the lesson of mutual tolerance, understanding, and brotherly love, the unity of the world would soon be an established fact.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 49)

The glorious Sun of Truth has once again risen in the East. From the far horizon of Persia its radiance is spreading far and wide, dispersing the dense clouds of superstition. The light of the unity of mankind is beginning to illumine the world, and soon the banner of Divine harmony and the solidarity of nations will be flying high in the Heavens. Yea, the breezes of the Holy Spirit will inspire the whole world! Oh, peoples and nations! Arise and work and be happy! Gather together under the tent of the unity of mankind! (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 109)

All the holy ones of God have tried with heart and soul to spread the light of love and unity throughout the world, so that the darkness of materiality might disappear and the light of spirituality might shine forth among the children of men. Then would hate, slander and murder disappear, and in their stead love, unity and peace would reign. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, pages 119-120)

And this is clear: a power above and beyond the powers of nature must needs be brought to bear, to change this black darkness into light, and these hatreds and resentments, grudges and spites, these endless wrangles and wars, into fellowship and love amongst all the peoples of the earth. This power is none other than the breathings of the Holy Spirit and the mighty inflow of the Word of God. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu'l-Baha, page 53)

....all the powers of the earth are impotent either to establish universal peace or to promote the oneness of the human world. Nothing short of the power of the Word of God and the breaths of the Holy Spirit can ever succeed. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Prominent People, page 265)

Note thou: could these fevers in the world of the mind, these fires of war and hate, of resentment and malice among the nations, this aggression of peoples against peoples, which have destroyed the tranquillity of the whole world ever be made to abate, except through the living waters of the teachings of God? No, never! (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu'l-Baha, page 53)

Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination, so that he may be able to search for truth unhindered. Truth is one in all religions, and by means of it the unity of the world can be realized.

All the peoples have a fundamental belief in common. Being one, truth cannot be divided, and the differences that appear to exist among the nations only result from their attachment to prejudice. If only men would search out truth, they would find themselves united. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 129)

Today the world of humanity is in need of international unity and conciliation. To establish these great fundamental principles a propelling power is needed. It is self-evident that the unity of the human world and the Most Great Peace cannot be accomplished through material means. They cannot be established through political power, for the political interests of nations are various and the policies of peoples are divergent and conflicting. They cannot be founded through racial or patriotic power, for these are human powers, selfish and weak. The very nature of racial differences and patriotic prejudices prevents the realization of this unity and agreement. Therefore, it is evidenced that the promotion of the oneness of the kingdom of humanity, which is the essence of the teachings of all the Manifestations of God, is impossible except through the divine power and breaths of the Holy Spirit. Other powers are too weak and are incapable of accomplishing this. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 11-12)

Quotes about God and our relationship to Him which are relatively easy to understand and memorize:

O Thou Who art the most manifest of the manifest and the most hidden of the hidden!
(Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, page 248)

He Who is everlastingly hidden from the eyes of men can never be known except through His Manifestation.....(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 49)

O SON OF MAN! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life. (Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, # 4)

O SON OF BEING! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me. For I have created thee rich and have bountifully shed My favor upon thee. (Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, # 11)

O SON OF BEING! Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant. (Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, # 5)

O SON OF BEING! Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation. (Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, # 59)

O BEFRIENDED STRANGER! The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life. (Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, # 32)

.....nearness to God is possible through devotion to Him,.....service to humanity;....unity with mankind, loving-kindness to all;.....acquisition of praiseworthy virtues,.....and.....sacrifice of self.....Nearness is likeness. ('Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 148)

Some Writings about the power of the Word of God and His Revelation:

(To inspire parents and teachers to continually rely on the Creative Word. These are not necessarily appropriate to use with kids, though some are perfect for that).

Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 295)

Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 141)

They who recite the verses of the All-Merciful in the most melodious of tones will perceive in them that with which the sovereignty of earth and heaven can never be compared. From them they will inhale the divine fragrance of My worlds - worlds which today none can discern save those who have been endowed with vision through this sublime, this beauteous Revelation. Say: These verses draw hearts that are pure unto those spiritual worlds that can neither be expressed in words nor intimated by allusion. Blessed be those who hearken. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 61)

The Word of God is the king of words and its pervasive influence is incalculable. It hath ever dominated and will continue to dominate the realm of being. The Great Being saith: The Word is the master key for the whole world, inasmuch as through its potency the doors of the hearts of men, which in reality are the doors of heaven, are unlocked..... Every thing which can be perceived is but an emanation therefrom. High, immeasurably high is this sublime station, in whose shadow moveth the essence of loftiness and splendour, wrapt in praise and adoration.

Methinks people's sense of taste hath, alas, been sorely affected by the fever of negligence and folly, for they are found to be wholly unconscious and deprived of the sweetness of His utterance. How regrettable indeed that man should debar himself from the fruits of the tree of wisdom while his days and hours pass swiftly away. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pages 173-174)

Know thou, moreover, that the Word of God - exalted be His glory - is higher and far superior to that which the senses can perceive, for it is sanctified from any property or substance. It transcendeth the limitations of known elements and is exalted above all the essential and recognized substances. It became manifest without any syllable or sound and is none but the Command of God which pervadeth all created things. It hath never been withheld from the world of being. It is God's all-pervasive grace, from which all grace doth emanate. It is an entity far removed above all that hath been and shall be.
(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pages 140-141)

O My servants! Deprive not yourselves of the unfading and resplendent Light that shineth within the Lamp of Divine glory. Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your radiant hearts. Feed it with the oil of Divine guidance, and protect it within the shelter of your constancy. Guard it within the globe of trust and detachment from all else but God, so that the evil whisperings of the ungodly may not extinguish its light. O My servants! My holy, My divinely ordained Revelation may be likened unto an ocean in whose depths are concealed innumerable pearls of great price, of surpassing luster. It is the duty of every seeker to bestir himself and strive to attain the shores of this ocean, so that he may, in proportion to the eagerness of his search and the efforts he hath exerted, partake of such benefits as have been pre-ordained in God's irrevocable and hidden Tablets. If no one be willing to direct his steps towards its shores, if every one should fail to arise and find Him, can such a failure be said to have robbed this ocean of its power or to have lessened, to any degree, its treasures? How vain, how contemptible, are the imaginations which your hearts have devised, and are still devising! O My servants! The one true God is My witness! This most great, this fathomless and surging Ocean is near, astonishingly near, unto you. Behold it is closer to you than your life-vein! Swift as the twinkling of an eye ye can, if ye but wish it, reach and partake of this imperishable favor, this God-given grace, this incorruptible gift, this most potent and unspeakably glorious bounty.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 325-326)

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 85)

Were any man to ponder in his heart that which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed and to taste of its sweetness, he would, of a certainty, find himself emptied and delivered from his own desires, and utterly subservient to the Will of the Almighty. Happy is the man that hath attained so high a station, and hath not deprived himself of so bountiful a grace. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 343)

Inspire then my soul, O my God, with Thy wondrous remembrance, that I may glorify Thy name. Number me not with them who read Thy words and fail to find Thy hidden gift which, as decreed by Thee, is contained therein, and which quickeneth the souls of Thy creatures and the hearts of Thy servants.
(Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, page 83)

The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it? Is it within human power, O Hakim, to effect in the constituent elements of any of the minute and indivisible particles of matter so complete a transformation as to transmute it into purest gold? Perplexing and difficult as this may appear, the still greater task of converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that We have been empowered to accomplish. The Force capable of such a transformation transcendeth the potency of the Elixir itself. The Word of God, alone, can claim the distinction of being endowed with the capacity required for so great and far-reaching a change. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 200)
Every man of insight will, in this day, readily admit that the counsels which the Pen of this Wronged One hath revealed constitute the supreme animating power for the advancement of the world and the exaltation of its peoples. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 86)

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded.

Through the power of the words He hath uttered the whole of the human race can be illumined with the light of unity, and the remembrance of His Name is able to set on fire the hearts of all men, and burn away the veils that intervene between them and His glory. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 286-287)

Verily I say, whatever is sent down from the heaven of the Will of God is the means for the establishment of order in the world and the instrument for promoting unity and fellowship among its peoples. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 67)

For were men to abide by and observe the divine teachings, every trace of evil would be banished from the face of the earth. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 176)

Give ear unto the verses of God which He Who is the sacred Lote-Tree reciteth unto you. They are assuredly the infallible balance, established by God, the Lord of this world and the next. Through them the soul of man is caused to wing its flight towards the Dayspring of Revelation, and the heart of every true believer is suffused with light. Such are the laws which God hath enjoined upon you, such His commandments prescribed unto you in His Holy Tablet; obey them with joy and gladness, for this is best for you, did ye but know. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 73)

When the Word of God is revealed unto all created things whoso then giveth ear and heedeth the Call is, indeed, reckoned among the most distinguished souls, though he be a carrier of ashes. And he who turneth away is accounted as the lowliest of His servants, though he be a ruler amongst men and the possessor of all the books that are in the heavens and on earth. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 186)

Peruse ye every day the verses revealed by God. Blessed is the man who reciteth them and reflecteth upon them. He truly is of them with whom it shall be well. Gather ye together with the utmost joy and fellowship and recite the verses revealed by the merciful Lord. By so doing the doors to true knowledge will be opened to your inner beings, and ye will then feel your souls endowed with steadfastness and your hearts filled with radiant joy. Peruse My verses with joy and radiance. Verily they will attract you unto God and will enable you to detach yourselves from aught else save Him. Thus have ye been admonished in God's Holy Writ and in this resplendent Tablet. (Baha'u'llah: The Importance of Deepening, page 188)

Every hand which setteth down His Words with true faith shall be filled by God, both in this world and in the next, with things that are highly prized; and every breast which committeth His Words to memory, God shall cause, if it were that of a believer, to be filled with His love; and every heart which cherisheth the love of His Words that heart will become the object of the glances of divine favour and on the Day of Resurrection will be highly praised by God. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 99)

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 73)

The source of courage and power is the promotion of the Word of God, and steadfastness in His Love. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 156)

From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should memorize phrases and passages bearing on various instances, so that in the course of their speech they may recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it, inasmuch as these holy verses are the most potent elixir, the greatest and mightiest talisman. So potent is their influence that the hearer will have no cause for vacillation. I swear by My life! This Revelation is endowed with such a power that it will act as the lodestone for all nations and kindreds of the earth. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 200)

O My servants! Through the might of God and His power, and out of the treasury of His knowledge and wisdom, I have brought forth and revealed unto you the pearls that lay concealed in the depths of His everlasting ocean. I have summoned the Maids of Heaven to emerge from behind the veil of

concealment, and have clothed them with these words of Mine - words of consummate power and wisdom. I have, moreover, with the hand of divine power, unsealed the choice wine of My Revelation, and have wafted its holy, its hidden, and musk-laden fragrance upon all created things. Who else but yourselves is to be blamed if ye choose to remain unendowed with so great an outpouring of God's transcendent and all-encompassing grace, with so bright a revelation of His resplendent mercy?... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 327-328)

Man is like unto a tree. If he be adorned with fruit, he hath been and will ever be worthy of praise and commendation. Otherwise a fruitless tree is but fit for fire. The fruits of the human tree are exquisite, highly desired and dearly cherished. Among them are upright character, virtuous deeds and a goodly utterance. The springtime for earthly trees occurreth once every year, while the one for human trees appeareth in the Days of God - exalted be His glory. Were the trees of men's lives to be adorned in this divine Springtime with the fruits that have been mentioned, the effulgence of the light of Justice would, of a certainty, illumine all the dwellers of the earth and everyone would abide in tranquillity and contentment beneath the sheltering shadow of Him Who is the Object of all mankind. The Water for these trees is the living water of the sacred Words uttered by the Beloved of the world. In one instant are such trees planted and in the next their branches shall, through the outpourings of the showers of divine mercy, have reached the skies. A dried-up tree, however, hath never been nor will be worthy of any mention. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 257)

The Word of God hath set the heart of the world afire; how regrettable if ye fail to be enkindled with its flame! Please God, ye will regard this blessed night as the night of unity, will knit your souls together, and resolve to adorn yourselves with the ornament of a goodly and praiseworthy character. Let your principal concern be to rescue the fallen from the slough of impending extinction, and to help him embrace the ancient Faith of God. Your behavior towards your neighbor should be such as to manifest clearly the signs of the one true God, for ye are the first among men to be re-created by His Spirit, the first to adore and bow the knee before Him, the first to circle round His throne of glory. I swear by Him Who hath caused Me to reveal whatever hath pleased Him! Ye are better known to the inmates of the Kingdom on high than ye are known to your own selves. Think ye these words to be vain and empty? Would that ye had the power to perceive the things your Lord, the All-Merciful, doth see - things that attest the excellence of your rank, that bear witness to the greatness of your worth, that proclaim the sublimity of your station! God grant that your desires and unmortified passions may not hinder you from that which hath been ordained for you. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 316-317)

He, the divine King, hath proclaimed the undisputed supremacy of the verses of His Book over all things that testify to His truth. For compared with all other proofs and tokens, the divinely-revealed verses shine as the sun, whilst all others are as stars. To the peoples of the world they are the abiding testimony, the incontrovertible proof, the shining light of the ideal King. Their excellence is unrivalled, their virtue nothing can surpass. They are the treasury of the divine pearls and the depository of the divine mysteries. They constitute the indissoluble Bond, the firm Cord, the Urvatu'l-Vuthqa, the inextinguishable Light. Through them floweth the river of divine knowledge, and gloweth the fire of His ancient and consummate wisdom. This is the fire which, in one and the same moment, kindleth the flame of love in the breasts of the faithful, and induceth the chill of heedlessness in the heart of the enemy. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, page 205)

Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 20)

Magnified be Thy name, O my God! I testify that if Thy servants were to turn towards Thee with the eyes Thou didst create in them and with the ears wherewith Thou didst endow them, they would all be carried away by a single word sent down from the right hand of the throne of Thy majesty. That word alone would suffice to brighten their faces, and to assure their hearts, and to cause their souls to soar up to the atmosphere of Thy great glory, and to ascend into the heaven of Thy sovereignty. (Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, pages 190-191)

Meditate upon that which hath streamed forth from the heaven of the Will of thy Lord, He Who is the Source of all grace, that thou mayest grasp the intended meaning which is enshrined in the sacred depths of the Holy Writings. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 143)

I testify that no sooner had the First Word proceeded, through the potency of Thy will and purpose, out of His mouth, and the First Call gone forth from His lips than the whole creation was revolutionized, and all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth were stirred to the depths. Through that Word the realities of all created things were shaken, were divided, separated, scattered, combined and reunited, disclosing, in both the contingent world and the heavenly kingdom, entities of a new creation, and revealing, in the unseen realms, the signs and tokens of Thy unity and oneness. Through that Call Thou didst announce unto all Thy servants the advent of Thy most great Revelation and the appearance of Thy most perfect Cause. (Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, pages 295-296)

It hath been decreed by Us that the Word of God and all the potentialities thereof shall be manifested unto men in strict conformity with such conditions as have been foreordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. We have, moreover, ordained that its veil of concealment be none other except its own Self. Such indeed is Our Power to achieve Our Purpose. Should the Word be allowed to release suddenly all the energies latent within it, no man could sustain the weight of so mighty a Revelation. Nay, all that is in heaven and on earth would flee in consternation before it. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 76-77)

Know assuredly that just as thou firmly believest that the Word of God, exalted be His glory, endureth for ever, thou must, likewise, believe with undoubting faith that its meaning can never be exhausted. They who are its appointed interpreters, they whose hearts are the repositories of its secrets, are, however, the only ones who can comprehend its manifold wisdom. Whoso, while reading the Sacred Scriptures, is tempted to choose therefrom whatever may suit him with which to challenge the authority of the Representative of God among men, is, indeed, as one dead, though to outward seeming he may walk and converse with his neighbors, and share with them their food and their drink. Oh, would that the world could believe Me! Were all the things that lie enshrined within the heart of Baha, and which the Lord, His God, the Lord of all names, hath taught Him, to be unveiled to mankind, every man on earth would be dumbfounded. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 175-176)

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being. At that hour will the Mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the spirit from the slumber of heedlessness. Then will the manifold favors and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude. He will discover in all things the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and the evidences of an everlasting Manifestation.

I swear by God! Were he that treadeth the path of guidance and seeketh to scale the heights of righteousness to attain unto this glorious and exalted station, he would inhale, at a distance of a thousand leagues, the fragrance of God, and would perceive the resplendent morn of a Divine guidance rising above the Day Spring of all things. Each and every thing, however small, would be to him a revelation, leading him to his Beloved, the Object of his quest. So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood, even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow. If in the uttermost corners of the East the sweet savors of God be wafted, he will assuredly recognize and inhale their fragrance, even though he be dwelling in the uttermost ends of the West. He will, likewise, clearly distinguish all the signs of God - His wondrous utterances, His great works, and mighty deeds - from the doings, the words and ways of men, even as the jeweler who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn, and heat from cold. When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of

the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude.

Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient Wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree that flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and outer ear, he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of "return" and "revival."

How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendors which He, Who is the King of Names and Attributes, hath destined for that City! The attainment unto this City quencheth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire. Within every blade of grass are enshrined the mysteries of an inscrutable Wisdom, and upon every rose-bush a myriad nightingales pour out, in blissful rapture, their melody. Its wondrous tulips unfold the mystery of the undying Fire in the Burning Bush, and its sweet savors of holiness breathe the perfume of the Messianic Spirit. It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death. In each one of its leaves ineffable delights are treasured, and within every chamber unnumbered mysteries lie hidden.

They that valiantly labor in quest of God, will, when once they have renounced all else but Him, be so attached and wedded unto that City, that a moment's separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that assembly, and will receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose, and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and readorned....

That City is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 267-270)

.....that which hath streamed forth from the Most Exalted Pen is conducive to the glory, the advancement and education of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Indeed it is the sovereign remedy for every disease, could they but comprehend and perceive it.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 73)

Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it. Then and only then will it attain unto true liberty. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 89)

O ye discerning ones! Verily, the words which have descended from the heaven of the Will of God are the source of unity and harmony for the world....

(Baha'u'llah, quoted by Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, page 37)

Through each and every one of the verses which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed, the doors of love and unity have been unlocked and flung open to the face of men. We have erewhile declared - and Our Word is the truth - : "Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship." Whatsoever hath led the children of men to shun one another, and hath caused dissensions and divisions amongst them, hath, through the revelation of these words, been nullified and abolished. From the heaven of God's Will, and for the purpose of ennobling the world of being and of elevating the minds and souls of men, hath been sent down that which is the most effective instrument for the education of the whole human race. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 95)

.....were men but to take heed they would readily appreciate that whatever hath streamed from and is set down by the Pen of Glory is even as the sun for the whole world and that therein lie the welfare, security and true interests of all men; otherwise the earth will be tormented by a fresh calamity every day and unprecedented commotions will break out. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 166)

That which is conducive to the regeneration of the world and the salvation of the peoples and kindreds of the earth hath been sent down from the heaven of the utterance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. Give ye a hearing ear to the counsels of the Pen of Glory. Better is this for you than all that is on the earth. Unto this beareth witness My glorious and wondrous Book.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 223)

....this Wronged One hath, at all times, proclaimed before the face of all the peoples of the world that which will serve as the key for unlocking the doors of sciences, of arts, of knowledge, of well-being, of prosperity and wealth. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 96)

Can any power withstand the penetrative influence of the Word of God? Nay, by God! The proof is clear and the evidence is complete! If anyone looketh with the eyes of justice he shall be struck with wonder and amazement and will testify that all the peoples, sects and races of the world should be glad, content and grateful for the teachings and admonitions of Baha'u'llah. For these divine injunctions tame every ferocious beast, transform the creeping insect into a soaring bird, cause human souls to become angels of the Kingdom, and make the human world a focus for the qualities of mercy.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, pages 292-293)

May your souls be illumined by the light of the Words of God, and may you become repositories of the mysteries of God, for no comfort is greater and no happiness is sweeter than spiritual comprehension of the divine teachings. If a man understands the real meaning of a poet's verses such as those of Shakespeare, he is pleased and rejoiced. How much greater his joy and pleasure when he perceives the reality of the Holy Scriptures and becomes informed of the mysteries of the Kingdom!
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 460)

Nothing can prevent the fulfilment of the Word of God!
Therefore when you see books and papers written against the Revelation, be not distressed, but take comfort in the assurance that the cause will thereby gain strength. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, page 105)

For the Word of God is collective wisdom, absolute knowledge and eternal truth.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 154)

Wherefore, O ye Baha'is, strive ye with all your might to create, through the power of the Word of God, genuine love, spiritual communion and durable bonds among individuals. This is your task.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 246)

...the penetrative influence of the Word of God in this new Dispensation hath caused women to be equal with men, and that in the arena of tests they will outdo others. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Women, page 396)

...the Words of God have innumerable significances and mysteries of meanings - each one a thousand and more. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 155)

Shouldst thou come with the whole of thy being to God and be attracted to the lights of the Kingdom of God and be enkindled by the fire of the love of God, then wilt thou see that which thou canst not see today, wilt comprehend the inner significance of the Word of God and thoroughly understand the mysteries contained in the holy Books. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith, page 391)

In this wondrous Age, at this time when the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name, bearing unnumbered gifts, hath risen above the horizon of the world, the Word of God hath infused such awesome power into the inmost essence of humankind that He hath stripped men's human qualities of all effect, and hath, with His all-conquering might, unified the peoples in a vast sea of oneness.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 20)

Through the power of His words the hearts of the people of all religions have been attuned in harmony.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 290)

The kingdom of peace, salvation, uprightness and reconciliation is founded in the invisible world, and it will by degrees become manifest and apparent through the power of the Word of God!
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith, page 409)

Among the institutes of the Holy Books is that of the foundation of places of worship. That is to say, an edifice or temple is to be built in order that humanity might find a place of meeting, and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship among them. The real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn, and it is the center of unity for all mankind. It is the collective center, the cause of accord and communion of hearts, the sign of the solidarity of the human race, the source of eternal life.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 65)

Praise be to God, today the splendour of the Word of God hath illumined every horizon, and from all sects, races, tribes, nations, and communities souls have come together in the light of the Word, assembled, united and agreed in perfect harmony. Oh! What a great number of meetings are held adorned with souls from various races and diverse sects!....Notwithstanding such diversity they associate in perfect harmony and unity, love and freedom; they have one voice, one thought and one purpose. Verily, this is from the penetrative power of the Word of God!
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 292)

I do not present myself at such political conferences, for the establishment of peace is unachievable save through the power of the Word of God. When a conference is convened, representative of all nations and working under the influence of the Word of God, then universal peace will be established but otherwise it is impossible. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, pages 295-296)

And this is clear: a power above and beyond the powers of nature must needs be brought to bear, to change this black darkness into light, and these hatreds and resentments, grudges and spites, these endless wrangles and wars, into fellowship and love amongst all the peoples of the earth. This power is none other than the breathings of the Holy Spirit and the mighty inflow of the Word of God.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 53)

Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 292)

.....all the powers of the earth are impotent either to establish universal peace or to promote the oneness of the human world. Nothing short of the power of the Word of God and the breaths of the Holy Spirit can ever succeed. (`Abdu'l-Baha: Prominent People, page 265)

Note thou: could these fevers in the world of the mind, these fires of war and hate, of resentment and malice among the nations, this aggression of peoples against peoples, which have destroyed the tranquillity of the whole world ever be made to abate, except through the living waters of the teachings of God? No, never! (`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 53)

There is no greater means to bring about affection between the white and the black than the influence of the Word of God. (Abdu'l-Baha: Power of Unity, page 69)

The establishment of universal peace is not possible save through the power of the Word of God...
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Peace, page 165)

The Hidden Words is a treasury of divine mysteries. When thou ponderest its contents, the doors of the mysteries will open. (`Abdu'l-Baha: The Importance of Deepening, page 197)

Then wilt thou see that today these heavenly Teachings are the remedy for a sick and suffering world, and a healing balm for the sores on the body of mankind. They are the spirit of life, the ark of salvation, the magnet to draw down eternal glory, the dynamic power to motivate the inner self of man.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 61)

The Master used to attach much importance to the learning by heart of Tablets of Baha'u'llah and the Bab. During His days it was a usual work of the children of the household to learn Tablets by heart...
(Shoghi Effendi: The Importance of Deepening, page 217)

.....investigate and study the Holy Scriptures word by word so that you may attain knowledge of the mysteries hidden therein. Be not satisfied with words, but seek to understand the spiritual meanings hidden in the heart of the words..... It is difficult to comprehend even the words of a philosopher; how much more difficult it is to understand the Words of God. The divine Words are not to be taken according

to their outer sense. They are symbolical and contain realities of spiritual meaning..... These are the mysteries of God. It is not the reading of the words that profits you; it is the understanding of their meanings. Therefore, pray God that you may be enabled to comprehend the mysteries of the divine Testaments.....

All the texts and teachings of the holy Testaments have intrinsic spiritual meanings. They are not to be taken literally. I, therefore, pray in your behalf that you may be given the power of understanding these inner real meanings of the Holy Scriptures and may become informed of the mysteries deposited in the words..... May your souls be illumined by the light of the Words of God, and may you become repositories of the mysteries of God, for no comfort is greater and no happiness is sweeter than spiritual comprehension of the divine teachings. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 459-460)

It is incumbent upon you to ponder in your hearts and meditate upon His words, and humbly to call upon Him, and to put away self in His heavenly Cause. These are the things that will make of you signs of guidance unto all mankind, and brilliant stars shining down from the all-highest horizon, and towering trees in the Abha Paradise. ("Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha' p. 241)

Now, if thou wishest to know the true remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Focus thine attention upon them. (‘Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, pages 151-152)

The first thing to do is to acquire a thirst for Spirituality, then Live the Life! Live the Life! Live the Life! The way to acquire this thirst is to meditate upon the future life. Study the Holy Words, read your Bible, read the Holy Books, especially study the Holy Utterances of Baha'u'llah; Prayer and Meditation, take much time for these two. Then will you know this Great Thirst, and then only can you begin to Live the Life! ~`Abdu'l-Baha: The Importance of Deepening, page 204

Everyone who truly seeks and justly reflects will admit that the teachings of the present day emanating from mere human sources and authority are the cause of difficulty and disagreement amongst mankind, the very destroyers of humanity, whereas the teachings of Baha'u'llah are the very healing of the sick world, the remedy for every need and condition. In them may be found the realization of every desire and aspiration, the cause of the happiness of the world of humanity, the stimulus and illumination of mentality, the impulse for advancement and uplift, the basis of unity for all nations, the fountain source of love amongst mankind, the center of agreement, the means of peace and harmony, the one bond which will unite the East and the West. `Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 440

Today nothing but the power of the Word of God which encompasses the realities of things can bring the thoughts, the minds, the hearts and the spirits under the shade of one Tree. (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 296)

For the world of nature is an animal world. Until man is born again from the world of nature, that is to say, becomes detached from the world of nature, he is essentially an animal, and it is the teachings of God which converts this animal into a human soul. (Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 290)

Everyone who truly seeks and justly reflects will admit that.... the teachings of Baha'u'llah are the very healing of the sick world, the remedy for every need and condition. In them may be found.....the cause of the happiness of the world of humanity,the basis of unity for all nations, the fountain source of love amongst mankind,the means of peace and harmony, the one bond which will unite the East and the West. `Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, page 440

If you read the utterances of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha with selflessness and care and concentrate upon them, you will discover truths unknown to you before and will obtain an insight into the problems that have baffled the great thinkers of the world. God in His essence can not be comprehended nor assume bodily form. We can only approach Him through the knowledge of His Manifestations. I pray that you may drink deep at the fountain-head of Their Sacred Teachings. (Shoghi Effendi: The Importance of Deepening, page 205)

It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a twofold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled; that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed. Thus hath Sadiq, son of Muhammad, spoken: "God verily will test them and sift them." This is the divine standard, this is the Touchstone of God, wherewith He proveth His servants. None apprehendeth the meaning of these utterances except them whose hearts are assured, whose souls have found favour with God, and whose minds are detached from all else but Him. In such utterances, the literal meaning, as generally understood by the people, is not what hath been intended.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, pages 254-255)

The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. This is evidenced by those who, today, though without a single letter of the accepted standards of learning, are occupying the loftiest seats of knowledge; and the garden of their hearts is adorned, through the showers of divine grace, with the roses of wisdom and the tulips of understanding. Well is it with the sincere in heart for their share of the light of a mighty Day!

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, page 211)

Some Writings on Progressive Revelation

(See also Manifestations as perfect Mirrors)

It is clear and evident to thee that all the Prophets are the Temples of the Cause of God, Who have appeared clothed in divers attire. If thou wilt observe with discriminating eyes, thou wilt behold Them all abiding in the same tabernacle, soaring in the same heaven, seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and proclaiming the same Faith. Such is the unity of those Essences of Being, those Luminaries of infinite and immeasurable splendor! Wherefore, should one of these Manifestations of Holiness proclaim saying: "I am the return of all the Prophets," He, verily, speaketh the truth. In like manner, in every subsequent Revelation, the return of the former Revelation is a fact, the truth of which is firmly established.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 52)

Beware, O believers in the Unity of God, lest ye be tempted to make any distinction between any of the Manifestations of His Cause, or to discriminate against the signs that have accompanied and proclaimed their Revelation. This indeed is the true meaning of Divine Unity, if ye be of them that apprehend and believe this truth. Be ye assured, moreover, that the works and acts of each and every one of these Manifestations of God, nay whatever pertaineth unto them, and whatsoever they may manifest in the future, are all ordained by God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Whoso maketh the slightest possible difference between their persons, their words, their messages, their acts and manners, hath indeed disbelieved in God, hath repudiated His signs, and betrayed the Cause of His Messengers.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 59-60)

There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 217)

In thine esteemed letter thou hadst inquired which of the Prophets of God should be regarded as superior to others. Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to

another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him. If any man, therefore, should fail to comprehend this truth, and should consequently indulge in vain and unseemly language, no one whose sight is keen and whose understanding is enlightened would ever allow such idle talk to cause him to waver in his belief.

The measure of the revelation of the Prophets of God in this world, however, must differ. Each and every one of them hath been the Bearer of a distinct Message, and hath been commissioned to reveal Himself through specific acts. It is for this reason that they appear to vary in their greatness. Their Revelation may be likened unto the light of the moon that sheddeth its radiance upon the earth. Though every time it appeareth, it revealeth a fresh measure of its brightness, yet its inherent splendor can never diminish, nor can its light suffer extinction.

It is clear and evident, therefore, that any apparent variation in the intensity of their light is not inherent in the light itself, but should rather be attributed to the varying receptivity of an ever-changing world. Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared. God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Day Star of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 78-81)

That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated.

Gird up the loins of your endeavor, O people of Baha, that haply the tumult of religious dissension and strife that agitateth the peoples of the earth may be stilled, that every trace of it may be completely obliterated. For the love of God, and them that serve Him, arise to aid this most sublime and momentous Revelation. Religious fanaticism and hatred are a world-devouring fire, whose violence none can quench. The Hand of Divine power can, alone, deliver mankind from this desolating affliction.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 287-288)

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient Being hath ever been, and will continue for ever to be, closed in the face of men. No man's understanding shall ever gain access unto His holy court. As a token of His mercy, however, and as a proof of His loving-kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self. Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God. Whoso hearkeneth to their call, hath hearkened to the Voice of God, and whoso testifieth to the truth of their Revelation, hath testified to the truth of God Himself. Whoso turneth away from them, hath turned away from God, and whoso disbelieveth in them, hath disbelieved in God. Every one of them is the Way of God that connecteth this world with the realms above, and the Standard of His Truth unto

every one in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. They are the Manifestations of God amidst men, the evidences of His Truth, and the signs of His glory.

The Bearers of the Trust of God are made manifest unto the peoples of the earth as the Exponents of a new Cause and the Revealers of a new Message. Inasmuch as these Birds of the celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they, therefore, are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 49-50)

And now concerning thy question regarding the nature of religion. Know thou that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God. Whenever this robe hath fulfilled its purpose, the Almighty will assuredly renew it. For every age requireth a fresh measure of the light of God. Every Divine Revelation hath been sent down in a manner that befitted the circumstances of the age in which it hath appeared.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 81)

Know of a certainty that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed unto men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appeareth above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approacheth its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declineth until it reacheth its setting point. Were it, all of a sudden, to manifest the energies latent within it, it would, no doubt, cause injury to all created things.... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty hath bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 87-88)

Should the Word be allowed to release suddenly all the energies latent within it, no man could sustain the weight of so mighty a Revelation. Nay, all that is in heaven and on earth would flee in consternation before it. Consider that which hath been sent down unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God. The measure of the Revelation of which He was the bearer had been clearly foreordained by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Powerful. They that heard Him, however, could apprehend His purpose only to the extent of their station and spiritual capacity. He, in like manner, uncovered the Face of Wisdom in proportion to their ability to sustain the burden of His Message. No sooner had mankind attained the stage of maturity, than the Word revealed to men's eyes the latent energies with which it had been endowed - energies which manifested themselves in the plenitude of their glory when the Ancient Beauty appeared, in the year sixty, in the person of Ali-Muhammad, the Bab. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 76-77)

God leaves not His children comfortless, but, when the darkness of winter overshadows them, then again He sends His Messengers, the Prophets, with a renewal of the blessed spring. The Sun of Truth appears again on the horizon of the world shining into the eyes of those who sleep, awaking them to behold the glory of a new dawn. Then again will the tree of humanity blossom and bring forth the fruit of righteousness for the healing of the nations. Because man has stopped his ears to the Voice of Truth and shut his eyes to the Sacred Light, neglecting the Law of God, for this reason has the darkness of war and tumult, unrest and misery, desolated the earth. I pray that you will all strive to bring each child of God into the radiance of the Sun of Truth, that the darkness may be dissipated by the penetrating rays of its glory, and the winter's hardness and cold may be melted away by the merciful warmth of its shining. (Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, pages 32-33)

.....the divine religions of the holy Manifestations of God are in reality one, though in name and nomenclature they differ. Man must be a lover of the light, no matter from what dayspring it may appear..... He must be a seeker of the truth, no matter from what source it come.....Absolute verities, no matter in what book they be recorded, must be accepted..... The strife between religions, nations and races arises from misunderstanding. If we investigate the religions to discover the principles underlying their foundations, we will find they agree; for the fundamental reality of them is one and not

multiple.....the purpose of religion is the acquisition of praiseworthy virtues, the betterment of morals, the spiritual development of mankind, the real life and divine bestowals. All the Prophets have been the promoters of these principles; none of Them has been the promoter of corruption, vice or evil. They have summoned mankind to all good. They have united people in the love of God,..... Some souls were lovers of the name Abraham, loving the lantern instead of the light, and when they saw this same light shining from another lantern, they were so attached to the former lantern that they did not recognize its later appearance and illumination. Therefore, those who were attached and held tenaciously to the name Abraham were deprived when the Abrahamic virtues reappeared in Moses. Similarly, the Jews were believers in Moses, awaiting the coming of the Messiah. The virtues and perfections of Moses became apparent in Jesus Christ most effulgently, but the Jews held to the name Moses, not adoring the virtues and perfections manifest in Him. Had they been adoring these virtues and seeking these perfections, they would assuredly have believed in Jesus Christ when the same virtues and perfections shone in Him. If we are lovers of the light, we adore it in whatever lamp it may become manifest, but if we love the lamp itself and the light is transferred to another lamp, we will neither accept nor sanction it. Therefore, we must follow and adore the virtues revealed in the Messengers of God - whether in Abraham, Moses, Jesus or other Prophets - but we must not adhere to and adore the lamp.....
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 151-153)

PART II--EXAMPLES OF WRITINGS USED FOR HOLY DAYS and the FEAST BEFORE THE FAST

(Most are appropriate for use with non-Baha'i guests)

Writings which our community has used for Holy Days associated with Baha-u-llah:

RIDVAN #1

Release yourselves, O nightingales of God, from the thorns and brambles of wretchedness and misery, and wing your flight to the rose-garden of unfading splendor. O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: "He Who is the Best-Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the glory of God's Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise." Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover: "Behold, your Well-Beloved hath come among men!" and to the messengers of the Monarch of love impart the tidings: "Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His glory!" O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court.

Behold how the manifold grace of God, which is being showered from the clouds of Divine glory, hath, in this day, encompassed the world. For whereas in days past every lover besought and searched after his Beloved, it is the Beloved Himself Who now is calling His lovers and is inviting them to attain His presence. Take heed lest ye forfeit so precious a favor; beware lest ye belittle so remarkable a token of His grace. Abandon not the incorruptible benefits, and be not content with that which perisheth. Lift up the veil that obscureth your vision, and dispel the darkness with which it is enveloped, that ye may gaze on the naked beauty of the Beloved's face, may behold that which no eye hath beheld, and hear that which no ear hath heard.

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

Night hath succeeded day, and day hath succeeded night, and the hours and moments of your lives have come and gone, and yet none of you hath, for one instant, consented to detach himself from that which perisheth. Bestir yourselves, that the brief moments that are still yours may not be dissipated and lost. Even as the swiftness of lightning your days shall pass, and your bodies shall be laid to rest beneath a canopy of dust. What can ye then achieve?

The everlasting Candle shineth in its naked glory. Behold how it hath consumed every mortal veil. O ye moth-like lovers of His light! Brave every danger, and consecrate your souls to its consuming flame. O ye that thirst after Him! Strip yourselves of every earthly affection, and hasten to embrace your Beloved. With a zest that none can equal make haste to attain unto Him. The Flower, thus far hidden from the sight of men, is unveiled to your eyes. In the open radiance of His glory He standeth before you. His voice summoneth all the holy and sanctified beings to come and be united with Him. Happy is he that turneth thereunto; well is it with him that hath attained, and gazed on the light of so wondrous a countenance. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 319-322)

RIDVAN#2

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne. This wronged One hath, ever since the early days of His life, cherished none other desire but this, and will continue to entertain no wish except this wish. There can be no doubt whatever that the

peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and revealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur from His habitation of glory.
(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 217-218)

Of old it hath been revealed: "Love of one's country is an element of the Faith of God." The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however, in the day of His manifestation proclaimed: "It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world." Through the power released by these exalted words He hath lent a fresh impulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men's hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God's holy Book.

O people of Justice! Be as brilliant as the light, and as splendid as the fire that blazed in the Burning Bush. The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth, whilst the fierceness of the flame of enmity and hatred cannot but result in strife and ruin. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 95-96)

Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him.... Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared. God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established. The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings pages 78-80)

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Day Star of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted.... These are not days of prosperity and triumph. The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life through the wholesome medicine which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings pages 80-81)

And now concerning thy question regarding the nature of religion. Know thou that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God. Whenever this robe hath fulfilled its purpose, the Almighty will

assuredly renew it. For every age requireth a fresh measure of the light of God. Every Divine Revelation hath been sent down in a manner that befitted the circumstances of the age in which it hath appeared. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings page 80)

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves. That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated.

Gird up the loins of your endeavor...., that haply the tumult of religious dissension and strife that agitateth the peoples of the earth may be stilled, that every trace of it may be completely obliterated. For the love of God, and them that serve Him, arise to aid this most sublime and momentous Revelation. Religious fanaticism and hatred are a world-devouring fire, whose violence none can quench. The Hand of Divine power can, alone, deliver mankind from this desolating affliction....

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings pages 287-88)

OTHER HOLY DAYS FOR BAHA'U'LLAH

Thine eye is My trust, suffer not the dust of vain desires to becloud its luster. Thine ear is a sign of My bounty, let not the tumult of unseemly motives turn it away from My Word that encompasseth all creation. Thine heart is My treasury, allow not the treacherous hand of self to rob thee of the pearls which I have treasured therein. Thine hand is a symbol of My loving-kindness, hinder it not from holding fast unto My guarded and hidden Tablets.... Unasked, I have showered upon thee My grace. Unpetitioned, I have fulfilled thy wish. In spite of thy undeserving, I have singled thee out for My richest, My incalculable favors.... O My servants! Be as resigned and submissive as the earth, that from the soil of your being there may blossom the fragrant, the holy and multicolored hyacinths of My knowledge. Be ablaze as the fire, that ye may burn away the veils of heedlessness and set aglow, through the quickening energies of the love of God, the chilled and wayward heart. Be light and untrammelled as the breeze, that ye may obtain admittance into the precincts of My court, My inviolable Sanctuary.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 322-323)

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor,... an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech.....Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be abalm to the suffering,....an ornament to the countenance of truth,.... a breath of life to the body of mankind..... a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart..... a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility. (Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pages 93-94)

Incline your ears, O friends of God, to the voice of Him Whom the world hath wronged, and hold fast unto whatsoever will exalt His Cause. He, verily, guideth whomsoever He pleaseth unto His straight Path. This is a Revelation that infuseth strength into the feeble, and crowneth with wealth the destitute.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 183-184)

Consider, moreover, how frequently doth man become forgetful of his own self, whilst God remaineth, through His all-encompassing knowledge, aware of His creature, and continueth to shed upon him the manifest radiance of His glory. It is evident, therefore, that, in such circumstances, He is closer to him than his own self. He will, indeed, so remain for ever, for, whereas the one true God knoweth all things, perceiveth all things, and comprehendeth all things, mortal man is prone to err, and is ignorant of the mysteries that lie enfolded within him.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 186)

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and

fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

Exert yourselves that ye may attain this transcendent and most sublime station, the station that can ensure the protection and security of all mankind. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 288)

The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System - the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 85)

The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 213)

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. Take heed that ye do not vacillate in your determination to embrace the truth of this Cause - a Cause through which the potentialities of the might of God have been revealed, and His sovereignty established. With faces beaming with joy, hasten ye unto Him. This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it; and as to him that hath refused to seek it - verily, God is Self-Sufficient, above any need of His creatures. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 136)

This is the Day in which God's most excellent favors have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness. It behoveth them to cleave to whatsoever will, in this Day, be conducive to the exaltation of their stations, and to the promotion of their best interests. Happy are those whom the all-glorious Pen was moved to remember, and blessed are those men whose names, by virtue of Our inscrutable decree, We have preferred to conceal.

Beseech ye the one true God to grant that all men may be graciously assisted to fulfill that which is acceptable in Our sight. Soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth, and is the Knower of things unseen.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 6-7)

My object is none other than the betterment of the world and the tranquillity of its peoples. The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded. Through the power of the words He hath uttered the whole of the human race can be illumined with the light of unity....(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 286)

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.

(Baha'u'llah: Baha'i Prayers (US), page 206)

Know ye from what heights your Lord, the All-Glorious is calling? Think ye that ye have recognized the Pen wherewith your Lord, the Lord of all names, commandeth you? Nay, by My life! Did ye but know it, ye would renounce the world, and would hasten with your whole hearts to the presence of the Well-Beloved. Your spirits would be so transported by His Word as to throw into commotion the Greater World - how much more this small and petty one! Thus have the showers of My bounty been poured down from the heaven of My loving-kindness, as a token of My grace; that ye may be of the thankful....

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 139-140)

O ye that dwell on earth! The distinguishing feature that marketh the preeminent character of this Supreme Revelation consisteth in that We have, on the one hand, blotted out from the pages of God's holy Book whatsoever hath been the cause of strife, of malice and mischief amongst the children of men, and have, on the other, laid down the essential prerequisites of concord, of understanding, of complete and enduring unity. Well is it with them that keep My statutes. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 97)

Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One. The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 10-11)

Let not your hearts be perturbed, O people, when the glory of My Presence is withdrawn, and the ocean of My utterance is stilled. In My presence amongst you there is a wisdom, and in My absence there is yet another, inscrutable to all but God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concurrence on high and a company of Our favoured angels. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 39)

O banished and faithful friend! Quench the thirst of heedlessness with the sanctified waters of My grace, and chase the gloom of remoteness through the morning-light of My Divine presence. Suffer not the habitation wherein dwelleth My undying love for thee to be destroyed through the tyranny of covetous desires, and overcloud not the beauty of the heavenly Youth with the dust of self and passion. Clothe thyself with the essence of righteousness, and let thine heart be afraid of none except God. Obstruct not the luminous spring of thy soul with the thorns and brambles of vain and inordinate affections, and impede not the flow of the living waters that stream from the fountain of thine heart. Set all thy hope in God, and cleave tenaciously to His unfailing mercy. Who else but Him can enrich the destitute, and deliver the fallen from his abasement?

O My servants! Were ye to discover the hidden, the shoreless oceans of My incorruptible wealth, ye would, of a certainty, esteem as nothing the world, nay, the entire creation. Let the flame of search burn with such fierceness within your hearts as to enable you to attain your supreme and most exalted goal - the station at which ye can draw nigh unto, and be united with, your Best-Beloved.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 323-324)

O friends! Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed, neither be neglectful of your high destiny. Suffer not your labors to be wasted through the vain imaginations which certain hearts have devised. Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll. With the utmost unity, and in a spirit of perfect fellowship, exert yourselves, that ye may be enabled to achieve that which beseemeth this Day of God. Verily I say, strife and dissension, and whatsoever the mind of man abhorreth are entirely unworthy of his station. Center your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 196)

That the heart is the throne, in which the Revelation of God the All-Merciful is centered, is attested by the holy utterances which We have formerly revealed.

Among them is this saying: "Earth and heaven cannot contain Me; what can alone contain Me is the heart of him that believeth in Me, and is faithful to My Cause." How often hath the human heart, which is the recipient of the light of God and the seat of the revelation of the All-Merciful, erred from Him Who is the Source of that light and the Well Spring of that revelation. It is the waywardness of the heart that removeth it far from God, and condemneth it to remoteness from Him. Those hearts, however, that are aware of His Presence, are close to Him, and are to be regarded as having drawn nigh unto His throne. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 186)

If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus

counselleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 315-316)

The Book of God is wide open, and His Word is summoning mankind unto Him. No more than a mere handful, however, hath been found willing to cleave to His Cause, or to become the instruments for its promotion. These few have been endued with the Divine Elixir that can, alone, transmute into purest gold the dross of the world, and have been empowered to administer the infallible remedy for all the ills that afflict the children of men. No man can obtain everlasting life, unless he embraceth the truth of this inestimable, this wondrous, and sublime Revelation. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 183)

The Prophets and Chosen Ones have all been commissioned by the One True God, magnified be His glory, to nurture the trees of human existence with the living waters of uprightness and understanding, that there may appear from them that which God hath deposited within their inmost selves. (Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Questions and Answers, page 139)

With the utmost friendliness and in a spirit of perfect fellowship take ye counsel together, and dedicate the precious days of your lives to the betterment of the world and the promotion of the Cause of Him Who is the Ancient and Sovereign Lord of all. He, verily, enjoineeth upon all men what is right, and forbiddeth whatsoever degradeth their station. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 184)

Nothing whatever can, in this Day, inflict a greater harm upon this Cause than dissension and strife, contention, estrangement and apathy, among the loved ones of God. Flee them, through the power of God and His sovereign aid, and strive ye to knit together the hearts of men, in His Name, the Unifier, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 9)

O My servants! Deprive not yourselves of the unfading and resplendent Light that shineth within the Lamp of Divine glory. Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your radiant hearts. Feed it with the oil of Divine guidance, and protect it within the shelter of your constancy. Guard it within the globe of trust and detachment from all else but God..... O My servants! My holy, My divinely ordained Revelation may be likened unto an ocean in whose depths are concealed innumerable pearls of great price, of surpassing luster. It is the duty of every seeker to bestir himself and strive to attain the shores of this ocean, so that he may, in proportion to the eagerness of his search and the efforts he hath exerted, partake of such benefits as have been pre-ordained in God's irrevocable and hidden Tablets. (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 325-326)

Some Writings our community has used for Holy Days associated with The Bab:

All praise be to the one true God - exalted be His glory - inasmuch as He hath, through the Pen of the Most High, unlocked the doors of men's hearts. Every verse which this Pen hath revealed is a bright and shining portal that discloseth the glories of a saintly and pious life, of pure and stainless deeds. The summons and the message which We gave were never intended to reach or to benefit one land or one people only. Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it. Then and only then will it attain unto true liberty. The whole earth is illuminated with the resplendent glory of God's Revelation. In the year sixty He Who heralded the light of Divine Guidance - may all creation be a sacrifice unto Him - arose to announce a fresh revelation of the Divine Spirit, and was followed, twenty years later, by Him through Whose coming the world was made the recipient of this promised glory, this wondrous favor. Behold how the generality of mankind hath been endued with the capacity to hearken unto God's most exalted Word -the Word upon which must depend the gathering together and spiritual resurrection of all men.... (Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 96-97)

All praise be to God Who hath, through the power of Truth, sent down this Book unto His servant, that it may serve as a shining light for all mankind... Verily this is none other than the sovereign Truth; it is the Path which God hath laid out for all that are in heaven and on earth. Let him then who will, take for himself the right path unto his Lord. Verily this is the true Faith of God, and sufficient witness are God and such as are endowed with the knowledge of the Book. This is indeed the eternal Truth which God,

the Ancient of Days, hath revealed unto His omnipotent Word - He Who hath been raised up from the midst of the Burning Bush. This is the Mystery which hath been hidden from all that are in heaven and on earth, and in this wondrous Revelation it hath, in very truth, been set forth in the Mother Book by the hand of God, the Exalted... (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 41)

It is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth, for as long as that guided soul is under the shadow of the Tree of Divine Unity, he and the one who hath guided him will both be recipients of God's tender mercy, whereas possession of earthly things will cease at the time of death. The path to guidance is one of love and compassion, not of force and coercion. This hath been God's method in the past, and shall continue to be in the future! He causeth him whom He pleaseth to enter the shadow of His Mercy. Verily, He is the Supreme Protector, the All-Generous.

There is no paradise more wondrous for any soul than to be exposed to God's Manifestation in His Day, to hear His verses and believe in them, to attain His presence, which is naught but the presence of God, to sail upon the sea of the heavenly kingdom of His good-pleasure, and to partake of the choice fruits of the paradise of His divine Oneness. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, pages 76-77)

The One true God may be compared unto the sun and the believer unto a mirror. No sooner is the mirror placed before the sun than it reflects its light. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 103)

The most acceptable prayer is the one offered with the utmost spirituality and radiance; its prolongation hath not been and is not beloved by God. The more detached and the purer the prayer, the more acceptable is it in the presence of God. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 78)

There is no paradise, in the estimation of the believers in the Divine Unity, more exalted than to obey God's commandments, and there is no fire in the eyes of those who have known God and His signs, fiercer than to transgress His laws and to oppress another soul, even to the extent of a mustard seed. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 79)

I adjure Thee by Thy might, O my God! Let no harm beset me in times of tests, and in moments of heedlessness guide my steps aright through Thine inspiration. Thou art God, potent art Thou to do what Thou desirest. No one can withstand Thy Will or thwart Thy Purpose. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, pages 209-210)

Thou didst create Me, O Lord, through Thy gracious favour and didst protect Me through Thy bounty in the darkness of the womb and didst nourish Me, through Thy loving-kindness, with life-giving blood. After having fashioned Me in a most comely form, through Thy tender providence, and having perfected My creation through Thine excellent handiwork and breathed Thy Spirit into My body through Thine infinite mercy and by the revelation of Thy transcendent unity, Thou didst cause Me to issue forth from the world of concealment into the visible world, naked, ignorant of all things, and powerless to achieve aught. Thou didst then nourish Me with refreshing milk and didst rear Me in the arms of My parents with manifest compassion, until Thou didst graciously acquaint Me with the realities of Thy Revelation and apprised Me of the straight path of Thy Faith as set forth in Thy Book..... (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, pages 173-174)

The substance wherewith God hath created Me is not the clay out of which others have been formed. He hath conferred upon Me that which the worldly-wise can never comprehend, nor the faithful discover.... I am one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God. Whosoever hath recognized Me, hath known all that is true and right, and hath attained all that is good and seemly..... God hath ordained that all the good things which lie in the treasury of His knowledge shall be attained through obedience unto Me..... (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 11)

I am the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things. I am the Countenance of God Whose splendour can never be obscured, the Light of God Whose radiance can never fade. Whoso recognizeth Me, assurance and all good are in store for him..... (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 12)

I am the Mystic Fane which the Hand of Omnipotence hath reared. I am the Lamp which the Finger of God hath lit within its niche and caused to shine with deathless splendour. I am the Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai in the gladsome Spot, and lay concealed in the midst of the Burning Bush. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 74)

We have created you from one tree and have caused you to be as the leaves and fruit of the same tree, that haply ye may become a source of comfort to one another. Regard ye not others save as ye regard your own selves, that no feeling of aversion may prevail amongst you so as to shut you out from Him Whom God shall make manifest..... (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 129)

God hath, at all times and under all conditions, been wholly independent of His creatures. He hath cherished and will ever cherish the desire that all men may attain His gardens of Paradise with utmost love, that no one should sadden another, not even for a moment, and that all should dwell within His cradle of protection and security until the Day of Resurrection which marketh the dayspring of the Revelation of Him Whom God will make manifest.

The Lord of the universe hath never raised up a prophet nor hath He sent down a Book unless He hath established His covenant with all men, calling for their acceptance of the next Revelation and of the next Book; inasmuch as the outpourings of His bounty are ceaseless and without limit. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, pages 86-87)

Peoples of the earth! Verily the resplendent Light of God hath appeared in your midst, invested with this unerring Book, that ye may be guided aright to the ways of peace and, by the leave of God, step out of the darkness into the light and onto this far-extended Path of Truth..... (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 61)

How vast the number of people who are well versed in every science, yet it is their adherence to the holy Word of God which will determine their faith, inasmuch as the fruit of every science is none other than the knowledge of divine precepts and submission unto His good-pleasure. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 88)

True knowledge, therefore, is the knowledge of God, and this is none other than the recognition of His Manifestation in each Dispensation. (The Bab: Selections from the Bab, page 89)

Lord! Enable all the peoples of the earth to gain admittance into the Paradise of Thy Faith, so that no created being may remain beyond the bounds of Thy good-pleasure. (Page 191)

I am, I am, I am the Promised One! I am the One Whose name you have for a thousand years invoked, at Whose mention you have risen, Whose advent you have longed to witness, and the hour of Whose Revelation you have prayed God to hasten. Verily, I say, it is incumbent upon the peoples of both the East and the West to obey My word, and to pledge allegiance to My person. ~The Bab (as quoted by Shoghi Effendi in God Passes By, page 21)

Some Writings we have used for Holy Days associated with Abdu'l-Baha:

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsan, the Afnan and My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: `When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.' The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch [Abdu'l-Baha]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful. (Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 221)

O people of the world! When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock. (Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, page 82)

In the Suriy-i-Ghusn (Tablet of the Branch) the following verses have been recorded: "There hath branched from the Sadratu'l-Muntaha this sacred and glorious Being, this Branch of Holiness; well is it with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow. Verily the Limb of the Law of God hath sprung forth from this Root which God hath firmly implanted in the Ground of His Will, and Whose Branch hath been so uplifted as to encompass the whole of creation. Magnified be He, therefore, for this sublime, this blessed, this mighty, this exalted Handiwork!... A Word hath, as a token of Our grace, gone forth from the Most Great Tablet - a Word which God hath adorned with the ornament of His own Self, and made it sovereign over the earth and all that is therein, and a sign of His greatness and power among its people.....Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favor unto you, the most perfect bounty upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whoso turneth towards Him hath turned towards God, and whoso turneth away from Him hath turned away from My beauty, hath repudiated My Proof, and transgressed against Me. He is the Trust of God amongst you, His charge within you, His manifestation unto you and His appearance among His favored servants... We have sent Him down in the form of a human temple. Blest and sanctified be God Who createth whatsoever He willeth through His inviolable, His infallible decree. They who deprive themselves of the shadow of the Branch, are lost in the wilderness of error, are consumed by the heat of worldly desires, and are of those who will assuredly perish."

(Baha-u'llah, as quoted by Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, pages 134-135)

"O Thou Who art the apple of Mine eye!" Baha'u'llah, in His own handwriting, thus addresses Abdu'l-Baha, "My glory, the ocean of My loving-kindness, the sun of My bounty, the heaven of My mercy rest upon Thee. We pray God to illumine the world through Thy knowledge and wisdom, to ordain for Thee that which will gladden Thine heart and impart consolation to Thine eyes." "The glory of God rest upon Thee," He writes in another Tablet, "and upon whosoever serveth Thee and circleth around Thee. Woe, great woe, betide him that opposeth and injureth Thee. Well is it with him that sweareth fealty to Thee; the fire of hell torment him who is Thine enemy." "We have made Thee a shelter for all mankind," He, in yet another Tablet, affirms, "a shield unto all who are in heaven and on earth, a stronghold for whosoever hath believed in God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. God grant that through Thee He may protect them, may enrich and sustain them, that He may inspire Thee with that which shall be a wellspring of wealth unto all created things, an ocean of bounty unto all men, and the dayspring of mercy unto all peoples." (Baha-u'llah, as quoted by Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, pages 135-136)

All the atoms of the earth have announced unto all created things that from behind the gate of the Prison-city there hath appeared and above its horizon there hath shone forth the Orb of the beauty of the great, the Most Mighty Branch of God - His ancient and immutable Mystery - proceeding on its way to another land. Sorrow, thereby, hath enveloped this Prison-city, whilst another land rejoiceth..... Blessed, doubly blessed, is the ground which His footsteps have trodden, the eye that hath been cheered by the beauty of His countenance, the ear that hath been honoured by hearkening to His call, the heart that hath tasted the sweetness of His love, the breast that hath dilated through His remembrance, the pen that hath voiced His praise, the scroll that hath borne the testimony of His writings.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pages 226-228)

Therefore, in the beginning the believers must make their steps firm in the Covenant so that the confirmations of Baha'u'llah may encircle them from all sides, the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse may become their supporters and helpers, and the exhortations and advices of Abdu'l-Baha, like unto the pictures engraved on stone, may remain permanent and ineffaceable in the tablets of all hearts.

(Abdu'l-Baha: Tablets of the Divine Plan, page 52)

In accordance with the explicit text of the Kitab-i-Aqdas Baha'u'llah hath made the Center of the Covenant the Interpreter of His Word - a Covenant so firm and mighty that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like.

(Abdu'l-Baha, cited in "The World Order of Baha'u'llah, selected Letters," p. 136)

"I affirm," is Abdu'l-Baha's own written comment on the Tablet of the Branch, "that the true meaning, the real significance, the innermost secret of these verses, of these very words, is my own servitude to the sacred Threshold of the Abha Beauty, my complete self-effacement, my utter nothingness before Him. This is my resplendent crown, my most precious adorning. On this I pride myself in the kingdom of earth

and heaven. Therein I glory among the company of the well-favored!" "No one is permitted," He warns us in the passage which immediately follows, "to give these verses any other interpretation." "I am," He, in this same connection, affirms, "according to the explicit texts of the Kitab-i-Aqdas and the Kitab-i-'Ahd the manifest Interpreter of the Word of God... Whoso deviates from my interpretation is a victim of his own fancy." (Abdu'l-Baha, as quoted by Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, page 138)

My name is Abdu'l-Baha. My qualification is Abdu'l-Baha. My reality is Abdu'l-Baha. My praise is Abdu'l-Baha. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race my perpetual religion... No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except Abdu'l-Baha. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory.

(Abdu'l-Baha, as quoted by Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, page 139)

Inasmuch as great differences and divergences of denominational belief had arisen throughout the past, every man with a new idea attributing it to God, Baha'u'llah desired that there should not be any ground or reason for disagreement among the Baha'is. Therefore, with His own pen He wrote the Book of His Covenant, addressing His relations and all people of the world, saying, "Verily, I have appointed One Who is the Center of My Covenant. All must obey Him; all must turn to Him; He is the Expounder of My Book, and He is informed of My purpose. All must turn to Him. Whatsoever He says is correct, for, verily, He knoweth the texts of My Book. Other than He, no one doth know My Book." The purpose of this statement is that there should never be discord and divergence among the Baha'is but that they should always be unified and agreed. (Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 322-323)

Ye live, all of you, within the heart of Abdu'l-Baha, and with every breath do I turn my face toward the Threshold of Oneness and call down blessings upon you, each and all.

(Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... Abdu'l-Baha, page 193)

Follow in the footsteps of Abdu'l-Baha, and in the pathway of the Abha Beauty,

(Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... Abdu'l-Baha, page 246)

....guide ye the people and educate them in the ways of Abdu'l-Baha.

(Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... Abdu'l-Baha, page 245)

O compassionate God! Thanks be to Thee for Thou hast awakened and made me conscious. Thou hast given me a seeing eye and favored me with a hearing ear, hast led me to Thy kingdom and guided me to Thy path. Thou hast shown me the right way and caused me to enter the ark of deliverance. O God! Keep me steadfast and make me firm and staunch. Protect me from violent tests, and preserve and shelter me in the strongly fortified fortress of Thy Covenant and Testament. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Seeing. Thou art the Hearing.

O Thou the Compassionate God. Bestow upon me a heart which, like unto a glass, may be illumined with the light of Thy love, and confer upon me thoughts which may change this world into a rose garden through the outpourings of heavenly grace.

Thou art the Compassionate, the Merciful. Thou art the Great Beneficent God.

(Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i Prayers (US edition), pages 71-72)

O my Lord and my Hope! Help Thou Thy loved ones to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, to remain faithful to Thy manifest Cause, and to carry out the commandments Thou didst set down for them in Thy Book of Splendours; that they may become banners of guidance and lamps of the Company above, wellsprings of Thine infinite wisdom, and stars that lead aright, as they shine down from the supernal sky. Verily art Thou the Invincible, the Almighty, the All-Powerful.

(Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... Abdu'l-Baha, page 259)

Whoso reciteth this prayer with lowliness and fervour will bring gladness and joy to the heart of this servant; it will be even as meeting Him face to face:

He is the All-Glorious! O God, my God! Lowly and tearful, I raise my suppliant hands to Thee and cover my face in the dust of that Threshold of Thine, exalted above the knowledge of the learned, and the

praise of all that glorify Thee. Graciously look upon Thy servant, humble and lowly at Thy door, with the glances of the eye of Thy mercy, and immerse him in the Ocean of Thine eternal grace.

Lord! He is a poor and lowly servant of Thine, enthralled and imploring Thee, captive in Thy hand, praying fervently to Thee, trusting in Thee, in tears before Thy face, calling to Thee and beseeching Thee, saying: O Lord, my God! Give me Thy grace to serve Thy loved ones, strengthen me in my servitude to Thee, illumine my brow with the light of adoration in Thy court of holiness, and of prayer to Thy Kingdom of grandeur. Help me to be selfless at the heavenly entrance of Thy gate, and aid me to be detached from all things within Thy holy precincts. Lord! Give me to drink from the chalice of selflessness; with its robe clothe me, and in its ocean immerse me. Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of Thy chosen ones in Thy path, O Lord of Glory in the Highest.

With this prayer doth Thy servant call Thee, at dawntide and in the night-season. Fulfil his heart's desire, O Lord! Illumine his heart, gladden his bosom, kindle his light, that he may serve Thy Cause and Thy servants.

Thou art the Bestower, the Pitiful, the Most Bountiful, the Gracious, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, pages 319-320)

He is, and should for all time be regarded, first and foremost, as the Center and Pivot of Baha'u'llah's peerless and all-enfolding Covenant, His most exalted handiwork, the stainless Mirror of His light, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, the embodiment of every Baha'i ideal, the incarnation of every Baha'i virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God, the Being "round Whom all names revolve," the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity, the Ensign of the Most Great Peace, the Moon of the Central Orb of this most holy Dispensation - styles and titles that are implicit and find their truest, their highest and fairest expression in the magic name Abdu'l-Baha. He is, above and beyond these appellations, the "Mystery of God" - an expression by which Baha'u'llah Himself has chosen to designate Him, and which, while it does not by any means justify us to assign to Him the station of Prophethood, indicates how in the person of Abdu'l-Baha the incompatible characteristics of a human nature and superhuman knowledge and perfection have been blended and are completely harmonized.

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, page 134)

O ye beloved of God, know that steadfastness and firmness in this new and wonderful Covenant is indeed the spirit that quickeneth the hearts which are overflowing with the love of the Glorious Lord; verily, it is the power which penetrates into the hearts of the people of the world! Your Lord hath assuredly promised His servants who are firm and steadfast to render them victorious at all times, to exalt their word, propagate their power, diffuse their lights, strengthen their hearts, elevate their banners, assist their hosts, brighten their stars, increase the abundance of the showers of mercy upon them, and enable the brave lions to conquer.

Hasten, hasten, O ye firm believers! Hasten, hasten, O ye steadfast! Abandon the heedless, set aside every ignorant, take hold of the strong rope, be firm in this Great Cause, draw light from this Evident Light, be patient and be steadfast in this wise Religion! Ye shall see the hosts of inspiration descending successively from the Supreme World, the procession of attraction falling incessantly from the heights of heaven, the abundance of the Kingdom of El-Abha outpouring continually and the teachings of God penetrating with the utmost power, while the heedless are indeed in evident loss.....

Were it not for the protecting power of the Covenant to guard the impregnable fort of the Cause of God, there would arise among the Baha'is, in one day, a thousand different sects as was the case in former ages. But in this Blessed Dispensation, for the sake of the permanency of the Cause of God and the avoidance of dissension amongst the people of God, the Blessed Beauty (may my soul be a sacrifice unto Him), has through the Supreme Pen written the Covenant and the Testament; He appointed a Center, the Exponent of the Book and the annuler of disputes. Whatever is written or said by Him is conformable to the truth and under the protection of the Blessed Beauty. He is infallible. The express purpose of this last Will and Testament is to set aside disputes from the world.

Suffer the friends to become firm in the Covenant and give the message of the Kingdom of Abha to other souls. Praise be to God that the believers in America are steadfast but the firmer they are the better that no one might be able to intrude and introduce disputes, for disputes destroy the foundation of God's Institution.

His Holiness Abraham, on Him be peace, made a covenant concerning His Holiness Moses and gave the glad-tidings of His coming. His Holiness Moses made a covenant concerning the Promised One, i.e. His Holiness Christ, and announced the good news of His Manifestation to the world. His Holiness Christ made a covenant concerning the Paraclete and gave the tidings of His coming. His Holiness the Prophet Muhammad made a covenant concerning His Holiness the Bab and the Bab was the One promised by Muhammad, for Muhammad gave the tidings of His coming. The Bab made a Covenant concerning the Blessed Beauty of Baha'u'llah and gave the glad-tidings of His coming for the Blessed Beauty was the One promised by His Holiness the Bab. Baha'u'llah made a covenant concerning a promised One who will become manifest after one thousand or thousands of years. He likewise, with His Supreme Pen, entered into a great Covenant and Testament with all the Baha'is whereby they were all commanded to follow the Center of the Covenant after His departure, and turn not away even to a hair's breadth from obeying Him. (~`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith, pages 357-359)

As to the most great characteristic of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, a specific teaching not given by any of the Prophets of the past: It is the ordination and appointment of the Center of the Covenant. By this appointment and provision He has safeguarded and protected the religion of God against differences and schisms, making it impossible for anyone to create a new sect or faction of belief. To ensure unity and agreement He has entered into a Covenant with all the people of the world, including the interpreter and explainer of His teachings, so that no one may interpret or explain the religion of God according to his own view or opinion and thus create a sect founded upon his individual understanding of the divine Words. The Book of the Covenant or Testament of Bahá'u'lláh is the means of preventing such a possibility, for whosoever shall speak from the authority of himself alone shall be degraded. Be ye informed and cognizant of this. (Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith, page 248)

The purpose of the Blessed Beauty in entering into this Covenant and Testament was to gather all existent beings around one point so that the thoughtless souls, who in every cycle and generation have been the cause of dissension, may not undermine the Cause. He hath, therefore, commanded that whatever emanateth from the Centre of the Covenant is right and is under His protection and favour, while all else is error. ~`Abdu'l-Baha

Today, the Lord of Hosts is the defender of the Covenant, the forces of the Kingdom protect it, heavenly souls tender their services, and heavenly angels promulgate and spread it broadcast. If it is considered with insight, it will be seen that all the forces of the universe, in the last analysis serve the Covenant. In the future it shall be made evident and manifest.

~`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 228

O my Lord and my Hope! Help Thou Thy loved ones to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, to remain faithful to Thy manifest Cause, and to carry out the commandments Thou didst set down for them in Thy Book of Splendours; that they may become banners of guidance and lamps of the Company above, wellsprings of Thine infinite wisdom, and stars that lead aright, as they shine down from the supernal sky. Verily art Thou the Invincible, the Almighty, the All-Powerful.

~`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, page 259

Writings for the Feast preceding the Fast:

Writings for the Feast of Ala, Loftiness

.....obligatory prayer and fasting produceth awareness and awakening in man, and are conducive to his protection and preservation from tests.

~Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith p. 368

Musical Selection

*FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH**

1. We, verily, have set forth all things in Our Book, as a token of grace unto those who have believed in God, the Almighty, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting. And We have ordained obligatory prayer and fasting so that all may by these means draw nigh unto God, the Most Powerful, the Well-Beloved. We have written down these two laws and expounded every irrevocable decree. We have forbidden mankind from following whatsoever might cause them to stray from the Truth, and have commanded them to observe that which will draw them nearer unto Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Loving. Say: Observe ye the commandments of God for the sake of His beauty, and be not of those who follow in the ways of the abject and the foolish. Page 2

2. All praise be unto God, Who hath revealed the law of obligatory prayer as a reminder to His servants, and enjoined on them the Fast that those possessed of means may become apprised of the woes and sufferings of the destitute. Page 2

3. One who performs neither good deeds nor acts of worship is like unto a tree without fruit and an action without an effect. Whosoever attaineth to the joy of worship will refuse to barter away a single righteous act or one word of God's remembrance in exchange for the possession of all created things. Fasting and obligatory prayer are the two wings that sustain the life of man. Blessed is he who soareth with their aid in the heaven of the love of God, the Lord of all worlds. Pages 2-3

4. Cling firmly to obligatory prayer and fasting. Verily, the religion of God is like unto heaven; fasting is its sun, and obligatory prayer is its moon. In truth, they are the pillars of religion whereby the righteous are distinguished from those who transgress His commands. We entreat God, exalted and glorified be He, to graciously enable all men to observe that which He hath revealed in His Ancient Book. Page 3

5. Be not neglectful of obligatory prayer and fasting. He who observeth them not hath never been nor will ever be acceptable in the sight of God. Follow ye wisdom under all conditions. He, verily, hath bidden all to observe that which hath been and will be of profit to them. He, in truth, is the All-Sufficing, the Most High. Page 3

6. We beseech God to assist His people that they may observe the most great and potent Fast, which is to protect one's eye from beholding that which is forbidden and to withhold one's self from food, drink and whatever is ungodly. We pray God to confirm holy souls that they may succeed in accomplishing that which they have been commanded in this Day. Page 6

7. Praise be unto Him Who hath revealed laws in accordance with His good-pleasure. Verily, He is sovereign over whatsoever He wishes. O My friends! Act ye in accordance with what ye have been commanded in the Book. Fasting hath been decreed for you in the month of 'Ala. Fast ye for the sake of your Lord, the Mighty, the Most High. Restrain yourselves from sunrise to sunset. Thus doth the Beloved of mankind instruct you on behalf of God, the All-Powerful, the Unconstrained. It is not for anyone to exceed the limits laid down by God and His law, nor should anyone follow his own idle

imaginings. Well is it with the one who fulfilleth My decrees for the love of My Beauty, and woe to the one who neglecteth the Dayspring of Command in the days of his Lord, the Almighty, the Omnipotent. Page 6

Musical Selection

8. There is no God beside Me, the Omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. We, verily, have commanded all to observe the Fast in these days as a bounty on Our part, but the people remain unaware, except for those who have attained unto the purpose of God as revealed in His laws and have comprehended His wisdom that pervadeth all things visible and invisible. Say: By God! His law is a fortress unto you, could ye but understand. Verily, He hath no purpose therein save to benefit the souls of His servants, but, alas, the generality of mankind remain heedless thereof. Cling ye to the cord of God's laws, and follow not those who have turned away from the Book, for verily they have opposed God, the Mighty, the Beloved. Page 7

9. These are the days of the Fast. Blessed is the one who through the heat generated by the Fast increaseth his love, and who, with joy and radiance, ariseth to perform worthy deeds. Verily, He guideth whomsoever He willeth to the straight path. Page 7

10. Even though to outward seeming the Fast be difficult and troublesome, yet inwardly it is a bounty and the cause of well-being. Purification and training are conditioned and dependent upon spiritual exercises. Only those disciplines, however, which are in accord with the Book of God and sanctioned by Divine law are acceptable, not those which the deluded have inflicted upon the people. Whatsoever God hath revealed is beloved of the soul. We beseech Him that He may graciously assist us to do that which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him. Page 8

11. Verily, I say, fasting is the supreme remedy and the most great healing for the disease of self and passion. Page 8

12. There are various stages and stations for the Fast and innumerable effects and benefits within it. Well is it with those who have attained unto them. Page 9

*FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU'L-BAHA**

13. In the realm of worship, fasting and obligatory prayer constitute the two mightiest pillars of God's Holy Law. Neglecting them is in no wise permitted, and falling short in their performance is not acceptable..... He declareth that observance of the commands of God derives from love for the beauty of the Best-Beloved. The seeker, when immersed in the ocean of the love of God, and moved by intense longing, will arise to carry out the laws of God. Thus, it is impossible that a heart which containeth the fragrance of God's love should yet fail to worship Him, except under conditions when such an action would agitate the enemies and stir up great incitement. Otherwise, a lover of the Abha Beauty will assuredly and continually demonstrate perseverance in the worship of the Lord. Page 12

14. *The laws of God, such as fasting, obligatory prayer and the like, as well as His counsels regarding virtues, good deeds and proper conduct must be carried out everywhere to the extent possible unless some insurmountable obstacle or some great danger presents itself and wisdom dictates otherwise. If, however, indolence and laxity prevail, such will hinder the outpourings of love from the clouds of divine mercy, and people will thus remain deprived. Page 13*

15. *Well is it with thee that hast followed the Law of God and hast arisen to observe the Fast during these blessed days, for this physical fast is a symbol of the spiritual fast. It cleanseth the soul from all selfish desires, develops its spiritual attributes, attracts it to the breezes of the All-Merciful, and enkindles it with the fire of divine love. Page 22*

16. *Fasting is the cause of the elevation of one's spiritual station. Page 22*

Musical Selection

*All selections are from The Importance of Obligatory Prayer and Fasting